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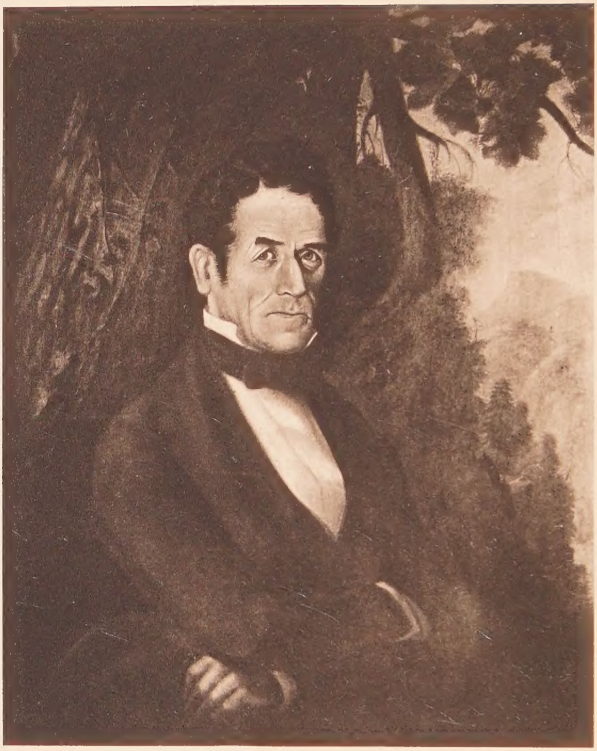

Daniel Pierce Thompson
in the prime of life

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The Novelist of Vermont

A Biographical and Critical Study of Daniel Pierce Thompson

By JOHN E. FLITCROFT

Cambridge, Massachusetts
HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS
1929

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TO MY UNCLE

GEORGE EHRET

37186

PREFACE

POSTERITY owes to Daniel Pierce Thompson a measure of recognition which it has failed to accord him. Several attempts have been made to write his biography, but the almost total lack of documentary evidence has in each case proved discouraging. This lack is an unavoidable disadvantage to the biographer, and makes it impossible for him to write with the usual definiteness and precision. Nevertheless, the present writer has endeavored to piece together the scattered fragments of evidence, in the hope of creating a consistent record of the man's life and achievement.

This study was begun with the assistance of Professor William Peterfield Trent and Professor Samuel Lee Wolff of Columbia University, and completed under the direction of Professor Arthur Huntington Nason of New York University. After reading the completed manuscript, Mr. Charles Miner Thompson of the Harvard University Press generously offered me the use of such of his grandfather's papers as were in his possession. At the same time Mr. Henry Howard Eddy of the Graduate School of Harvard University kindly permitted me to draw upon an M. A. thesis on Daniel Pierce Thompson which he submitted at Middlebury College in May, 1927.

To these gentlemen I am chiefly indebted, but I wish also to record my obligation to the members of the English Department of New York University; to the officers of the libraries of Dartmouth College and of Harvard University; to the officers of the New York City, the Boston, and the Vermont State libraries; and, finally, to the officers of the Vermont Historical Society.

JOHN E. FLITCROFT

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

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INTRODUCTION

BEARING in mind that I was born in Vermont, I find a certain piquancy in my earliest recollection. A child still in dresses, I had climbed up the carriage gate of the old place on Barre Street in Montpelier and was gazing entranced at an elephant that was eating its breakfast of hay. The incident is significant of a simpler time. The butcher's cart with its open end and suspended steelyards called regularly along the country ways; the tin peddler, with his cart bristling with brooms and bright with tin pans on which the sun shone gloriously, was a welcome visitor, and circuses drove by night from village to village and donned the scarlet coats and tinsel of the grand procession at the roadside in the early morning. If I could remember my grandfather as well as I can remember the big leathery beast that so absorbed my attention in that dewy hour, I could make a real contribution to Mr. Flitcroft's interesting Life. Unfortunately I have only one memory of my grandfather. I was playing on the floor of the pleasant, homely living-room of the old house and was, I suppose, making more or less noise, when my mother warned me to play quietly so as not to disturb "grandpa," who "was n't feeling very well." I looked at the old man with sudden interest. He was lying on the sofa with his face to the wall, and I remember the look of his broad back, and of the unruly shock of iron-gray hair that stood out in every direction from his head. It may be significant of his character that the protest against my noise came, not from him, but from my mother.

Of course, in later years I heard the older people talk of him. They had quick and humorous eyes in Montpelier. There is somewhere a fabled town where the people live by taking in one another's washing. In Montpelier we got our enjoyment by chuckling over one another's peculiarities, an achievement that, unlike the other, is perfectly feasible. But if Montpelier folk smiled over my grandfather, they never spoke of him, I think, except in admiration and affection. They might chuckle over the carpet-slippers, trodden down at the heel, in which he used to shuffle through the village street to the office of his newspaper, the *Green Mountain Freeman*, and allude with enjoyment to the somewhat showy way in which he chewed tobacco, but there was in their banter always an undercurrent of pride as in a citizen who did them honor. In my hero-worshipping days, I was curious about him, and, I 'm afraid, sought in him material with which to feed my boyish vanity. It was in some such mood that I once questioned an old country gentlewoman who had known him well, and from whom I hoped to hear many gratifying reminiscences. But she proved inarticulate; she was convinced that he was a great man, but what had most impressed her tidy New England soul was that, as she expressed it, he was a "dretful sloven." That phrase she repeated often, but could find no other with which to describe him. It was not one that at the time much flattered my pride of family. Another picture of him I got from some of the women who had been the girl friends of my aunt Frances, — "Franky" Thompson, — a girl who died in her seventeenth year and who by all report had a brilliant mind and vivid personality. Her friends filled the ever-hospitable house, it seems, and at table my grand-

father used to delight, and perhaps somewhat awe, the young things by expounding to them the art and mystery of novel-writing. He loved young company, and in spite of untidiness seems to have had the art of making young company love him. Mr. Flitcroft speaks of the pleasure that boys found in his company; apparently girls found pleasure in it also.

It is natural enough that I should have no other personal recollection of my grandfather than the one I have related, for when he died, in 1868, I was only four years old, and, moreover, since my parents lived in New York City, I was not much at the old place except in summer. After my grandfather's death, however, the house fell to my father, and until it burned we used it as a summer home. I remember it well and can describe it even now in some detail, which is fortunate, since to write a description of the place and of the life that the family lived there is the special task that Mr. Flitcroft's kindness has assigned me.

To a child, of course, the world is a miracle of wonder and beauty; his home seems to him a palace and his parents super-folk. Childish illusion in respect to family splendor must be allowed for in reading any description of a place founded on childish recollection. But though I fear I may describe the place as bigger and more delightful than it was, I am convinced that it was charming. It was the last house on the left as you went along the road toward Barre. Probably to correct a grade originally too steep, the roadbed had been cut away in front of the house. Thus you had, first, the carriage road, then, at a higher level, the sidewalk, then a retaining wall, and finally our yard. I think there was

no retaining wall between the road and the sidewalk, but I do remember that great slabs of stone were laid up there slantwise, and that among the interstices wild roses grew abundantly, which in their season filled the street with perfume and color. You went up some stone steps to reach our yard, where a path led among trees — a black-cherry tree is one that I characteristically remember — to the house, a white and green Greek temple of wood with fine Ionic columns. The house was unusual in having a second-story balcony running the width of the front. Along that path, against that white and classic background, my grandmother, clad in her best black silk, used to pass on Sunday mornings on her way to church. I can see her now stooping to pluck a sprig or two of the caraway that grew beside the path, to nibble at during the long sermon. Watching her, I conceived an immense respect for caraway seeds as a delicacy.

On entering the house by the front door, you found yourself in a wide hall with the staircase going up on the right. On the left was the parlor, a sacred and awesome place, for the most part kept shut. I remember that it had rosewood furniture upholstered in blue satin with a pattern of white flowers. I greatly admired that furniture and touched it with hesitation and respect. The only other things I remember in the room are some wonderful wax flowers under glass, and on the mantel, or perhaps on a "what-not," a tiny brass goat drawing a wheeled vehicle, the body of which was mother-of-pearl. The goat was one of my earliest infatuations, and survived to delight my own children.

If you went straight ahead past the staircase in the front hall, you came to the living-room. I should say

that it was always full of women busy with fancy-work or mending, braiding rugs, or dressmaking, and full also of talk contributed for the most part by my grandmother, who was incurably voluble. But hers was no empty chatter; it was shrewd, vigorous, racy talk, full of kindly humor, and graced with old-fashioned Yankee phrases. She always described, for example, a man of fifty years as "youngerly." And if "elderly" is proper, why is not "youngerly" proper also — and it is a much more kindly word! My grandmother — as Mr. Flitcroft narrates — eventually went to Wisconsin to live with a married daughter, and for a number of years I saw little of her. But she "came back East" now and then in the summer, and on one of those occasions, — when I was about nineteen years old, — I saw much of her. I remember saying enthusiastically that I 'd rather listen to her conversation than to that of any young girl I knew — a real compliment from a boy of my age. She is said to have been beautiful in her youth, and I can easily believe it, when I think of the animated face and fine figure of her later years. My grandfather was thirty-six years old when he married; my grandmother was a girl of seventeen.

But the spot in the old house that I remember best is the broad upper hall. If you went up the front stairs and turned, you found yourself in what was really a somewhat generous room. On the right were high shelves of books; in front was a sunny window, or perhaps a glass door, opening on the balcony already mentioned. On the left, set against the stair railing, was a big flat desk where I suppose my grandfather wrote. But what excited my interest most were the shotguns and the fishing-rods, the shot-pouches and the powder-

flasks, the creels and the fly-books and other sporting paraphernalia that were all about the place. I suspect that the more elegant of those objects belonged to the younger generation, to my father and to my Uncle Dan. I think my grandfather was the man to be content with a pole cut in the woods, and to be likely, with that crude implement, to catch more fish than his sons; at any rate, he left a notable reputation as an angler. Even more delightful than the guns and the rods were the thin drawers at the bottom of the bookcases in which my Uncle Dan housed his collections of minerals and insects, many brilliant butterflies and dusky moths among them.

At the right of this hall was the guest-room, which my father and mother occupied on their summer visits home — a square cool room facing green meadow-land, the placid river, and the sharply rising hills beyond. It was a charming view and oh, so bathed in quietness! The singing of bobolinks in the early summer, and in rich July the swish of scythes through the grass and the ring of the whetstone on the blades were the harshest sounds you heard.

After my grandfather died, my father added a considerable ell, running off to the right as you faced the house from the street. In that ell were the dining-room and the kitchen, — rooms that, curiously enough, I do not remember in the old house, — and connected with the ell, the open woodshed and the barn. A veranda ran along the front of the ell, on which, among other things now forgotten by me, stood my rocking-horse — a huge animal, if I can trust my memory.

Behind the house the lot rose as if tipped up to catch the sun. Containing several acres, it was large enough for apple trees and a garden on one side, and on the other

for pasturage for the cow that I think we sometimes kept. The hired man used to save for me disks cut from the ends of sticks in which the heart wood made fantastic figures and sometimes odd faces. There were hens in the back yard, and in the ell I could observe the exciting operations of cooking, hear the sound of grinding coffee, and smell the delicious odor of it when roasting. My Uncle Dan, a slim young gentleman home from Amherst College, occupied a room in the ell in the summer. A thrilling incident was seeing him fire a charge of salt in the direction of some marauding boys who were trying to steal cherries from a tree conveniently close to the fence.

These things that I have told are all trivial, but I think that, taken together, they show something of what life at the old house was. In the letter from my Uncle Dan that Mr. Flitcroft prints in his Appendix there is a passage that seems to hint at some degree of hardship's falling on the family in my grandfather's last days. Of course, my grandfather's ability to earn had ceased, and doubtless he suffered in his pride from that cause, but my father, who had a good law practice in New York, provided for all material wants.

The old house burned to the ground two years after my grandfather's death. The house was rented that winter. The tenants, I have always heard, had a "hired girl" who had a superstitious fear of "spirits," and who consequently kept an oil lamp burning at her bedside all night. The upsetting of that lamp caused the fire. It was the dead of winter, the village fire department had nothing but old hand tubs, and, moreover, probably found it difficult to get water from the frozen river. At any rate, the fire spread from the ell, where the maid's

room was, to the main house, and both ell and house were completely consumed. I remember driving by the place with my parents during the following summer and seeing the tall chimney rising pathetically from the open, already weed-grown cellar. The sight filled my mind with childish dismay. I had my own personal share in the family misfortune. Before we left Montpelier for New York the preceding fall, my mother had taken me to an unoccupied room in the ell, and, showing me a large clothes-basket piled high with books, told me that they were for me as soon as I should be old enough to enjoy them. They went with the fire. I would give much to know, even now, what they were.

Books indeed abounded in the house. There was in it at the time of the fire a library of perhaps three thousand volumes — many of which were saved and are now mine. Except in a few instances I cannot be sure which were my grandfather's and which my father's, but whatever the ownership, the character of the collection seems to me significant, for doubtless the father's taste was reflected in the son's. What strikes me as being perhaps biographically interesting is that it contained just the books that, from reading my grandfather's novels, anyone would expect him to own — the novels of Fielding and Smollett and Sterne, and of Scott and Cooper, the poems of Milton and Pope and Swift, the essays of Johnson in the *Rambler*, and of Steele and Addison in the *Spectator*, and the sonorous history of Gibbon. In fact, every author whom Mr. Fliteroft lists as a favorite of my grandfather's is represented there except, I think, Crabbe. If, in discussing *The Adventures of Timothy Peacock*, Mr. Fliteroft had known that the library contained Scarron's *Comic Romance*, — a translation pub-

lished in London in 1703, — and the somewhat scandalous works of the humorous Tom Brown, published in London in 1715, he might have had some further comment to make on the literary models after which that rather crude satire was patterned. There was nothing, of course, to prevent my father from buying old books, but I like to think that those particular volumes belonged to my grandfather. That satire against Masonry, product of the political excitement that made the phrase "a good enough Morgan" leap naturally to a practical politician's lips, was published in 1835. Mr. James A. Odiorne's compilation, published at Boston in 1830, of *Opinions* [all hostile] *on Speculative Masonry* was in the library. From that fact perhaps more solid inferences can be drawn than from Scarron or from Brown.

No member of the family was at home at the time of the fire, and those who carried out the books probably seized on those which, having showy bindings, looked the more valuable. The fact may account for the paucity of volumes relating to American history. There are a few such books, however. There is, for example, Daniel Chipman's *Memoir of Thomas Chittenden*, the first governor of Vermont, published at Middlebury, Vermont, in 1849, and Robinson's *History of America*, the first American edition, published at Philadelphia in 1812. And there is a copy of the first American edition of Cotton Mather's *Magnalia*, published at Hartford in 1820, a book that Mr. Fliteroft says my grandfather "must have" read. Another interesting point is either that the library held no religious books or that none survived the flames. In his *Doomed Chief* he shows no liking for the Puritans. So far as the library goes, his own Puritan heredity shows in only one book. It is entitled *The Illustrated*

Christian Martyrology: Being an Authentic and Genuine Historical Account of the Principal Persecutions against the Church of Christ, in Different Parts of the World, by Pagans and Papists. It was "compiled from the latest sources" by the Reverend C. Sparry, and published at Philadelphia in 1853. The illustrations are in lurid colors and have a delightfully ghoulish realism. As a child I used to find in them a peculiar shivery delight.

The collection as a whole showed a sound taste, but it was a taste influenced, not by Boston, but by New York. Since my father lived in New York, that perhaps was natural in his case; but if my grandfather turned — and we know he did turn — to Longfellow and Sparks for literary advice, he did not buy many of their books. Cooper, as I have said, was in the library at the old house, and so was Washington Irving; but, except for two or three copies of the familiar brown volumes of Longfellow published by Ticknor and Fields, there was little in the library that hailed from Boston. Sparks himself was wholly unrepresented. There was no single volume of Hawthorne's. The evidence of the library, so far as it has any validity or pertinence, points to a man who drew his culture from the eighteenth century, and who, looking about his contemporary world, found the models for his own stories primarily in Scott and Cooper. There is nothing to indicate that he knew the work of the others who, like William Gilmore Simms, were cultivating the American historical novel, though, to be sure, the work of the Philadelphian, Charles Brockden Brown, escaped the flames. The edition, however, is dated 1859, and at that date the larger part of my grandfather's work was done. He had a liking for ghostly machinery. I should like to believe that "Monk" Lewis's

Tales of Terror, published in 1808, and Mrs. Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and Schiller's *Ghost Seer*, published in companion volumes in 1831, which were all in the collection, belonged to him. At any rate, they represent one strain in the family taste, and one that, I admit, still persists.

No one knows what interesting things may not have been lost in the fire. No family records, and almost none of my grandfather's papers and correspondence, were saved. I had supposed that even more was destroyed than, as a matter of fact, was the case. When my uncle, Daniel G. Thompson, himself a voluminous writer, died, I received a considerable bundle of manuscripts which, when I came to examine it, proved to contain, among many things of his own, various memoranda made by my grandfather of picturesque incidents, scenarios of his novels, and, best of all, the full text, so far as completed, of *The Honest Lawyer*, the novel on which he was at work when death overtook him, and which is here reprinted as an appendix. He was old and sick, but the handwriting is firm and clear, and the story, though by no means his best, is certainly not his worst. Probably these manuscripts were given to my uncle when his father died, and thus escaped the flames.

Judge Thompson was a picturesque and lovable man, a born story-teller, whose talent was imperfectly trained. He wrote one or two novels that, I think, will not wholly die so long as there are persons who enjoy a good "yarn," or who take an interest in the early romantic history of Vermont. Many men before Mr. Flitcroft undertook to write his Life, but all except himself and Mr. Henry Howard Eddy, whose excellent study is still unfortunately in manuscript, abandoned the task, mainly be-

cause the material on which to base it was — largely on account of the fire — so scanty. In view of the difficulties, Mr. Flitcroft's achievement is especially remarkable, for he has succeeded not merely in the comparatively easy task of giving a good critical account of the novels, but in producing a real human portrait and in providing as a background a sharply characterized picture of the life of a remarkable Vermont village in the earlier half of the nineteenth century, a period when Yankeeland was still pure Yankee. And the author of *The Green Mountain Boys*, a novel that has gone through sixty editions and that cannot yet be described as dead, deserved the attention.

The same annoying lack of precise information that hampered the biographer of my grandfather prevails in respect to two of the three portraits of him that illustrate this volume. I own the one that represents him as a young man; but all I know about it is that it was once the property of my uncle, Daniel G. Thompson, at whose death it came to me. It is a small picture painted on wood, and apparently represents him seated in an old-fashioned kitchen chair. I think that probably it was painted by one of the itinerant artists that used to go, I'm told, from door to door in New England and paint portraits for such sums as their mediocre talent or glib tongues could induce their customers to give. The reader must judge for himself how old my grandfather was at the time. My own guess is that it represents him much as he looked when he began to woo the Miss Eunice Robinson who later became my grandmother.

The other portrait about which more knowledge would be welcome is the interesting likeness that hangs in the rooms of the Vermont Historical Society. There

is, I think, no doubt that it is authentic. It carries its own proof. Let the reader compare with the same characteristics in the Wood portrait, which represents him as an old man, the drooping eyelid and the down-turned mouth that, with their suggestion of humorous shrewdness, temper the granite-like strength of the face. I think such a comparison is conclusive, but, fortunately, there is other proof of its genuineness. Though I cannot remember ever having seen it until I saw it in the rooms of the Society, it came straight from my own family. It was presented to the Historical Society in 1915 by the estate of the Honorable George P. Burrows of Madison, Wisconsin. Now, Mr. Burrows was my grandfather's son-in-law, and it was with him that my grandmother lived for many years after the death of her husband. Finally, what other Vermonter had so identified himself with Vermont as to be painted against a background formed of Vermont evergreen and of the most striking of all Vermont mountains, Camel's Hump? The picture presents him in the full vigor of middle life, presumably when he was at the height of his fame as the author of *The Green Mountain Boys*.

There is no mystery about the third portrait. It was painted and presented to the state of Vermont by Mr. Thomas Waterman Wood, and hangs in the State House at Montpelier. Mr. Wood, who was a native of Montpelier, was president of the National Academy of Design and of the American Water Color Society. He painted the portrait in 1880, that is, twelve years after the death of my grandfather. However, he remembered the old man well, had the help of good photographs, and, as my grandmother once told me, of some of my grandfather's clothing in which to dress his model. By everyone who remembered my grandfather,

it was regarded as a remarkably good likeness. It represents him as he looked in his final years, and is painted, I think, in the same affectionately humorous spirit in which, as I have already remarked, the people of Montpelier used to speak of him. Mr. Wood, as his *Village Post Office* and other pictures show, particularly liked to paint the people among whom he had grown up. Those pictures abound in actual portraits of the men and women of Montpelier, done with keen enjoyment of their characteristic peculiarities, yet with affection and full appreciation of their worth as human beings. In the same way Wood's portrait of my grandfather brings out everything in his face and attire that might provoke amusement and yet does full justice to the strength of the fine old face. The visitor who looks on it may smile, but will be sure also, I think, to feel respect.

The two other illustrations in the book require little comment. The woodcut of Montpelier appeared in the issue of the New York *Illustrated News* for February 5, 1853. The drawing, however, must have been made before 1849, the year in which the railway came to Montpelier, for the railway bridge across the Winooski does not appear in it. It shows the Montpelier that was familiar to my grandfather. The other view is a reproduction of a photograph taken in 1860 and undoubtedly the first ever made of the village. Both pictures form part of an interesting collection gathered by the National Life Insurance Company, by whose courtesy they are here reproduced.

CHARLES MINER THOMPSON

Part I

LIFE OF
DANIEL PIERCE THOMPSON

CHAPTER I

YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD

BORN in the shadow of Bunker Hill twelve years after the close of the Revolutionary War, Daniel Pierce Thompson became in Fenimore Cooper's generation one of the most widely read American novelists. To-day he is chiefly remembered — so far as he is remembered at all — as the author of *The Green Mountain Boys*. Although this popular historical romance is by no means his only claim to distinction, he has in fact been so far overshadowed by the outstanding figure of Fenimore Cooper as to be almost completely forgotten by the reading public. Those readers, however, who have been stirred by the exploits of Ethan Allen and Seth Warner may wish to know something of the life and character of the man who has done more than any other person to perpetuate the early history of Vermont.

Thompson came of English stock. His earliest known ancestors on both sides — James Thompson and Ezekial Cheever[1] — were among the first colonists of Massachusetts Bay. The head of the family, James Thompson, is said to have been born in England, probably in 1593,[2] and to have come with his wife to Massachusetts

[1] The novelist asserts (E. A. and G. L. Duyckinck, *Cyclopedia of American Literature*, i, 944) that his mother, Rebecca Parker Thompson, was a descendant of Ezekial Cheever. Although this statement cannot be conclusively proved by known extant records, the probability of its truth is very strong. See Appendix C for genealogy.

[2] James Thompson is not included in Hotton's *Lists of Emigrants to America 1600–1700*. These lists, however, are not complete. Other known circumstances of Thompson's life make it clear that he must have been born in England approximately at the time given above.

(possibly in Winthrop's company) some time before 1632.[1] The Records of the First Church in Charlestown contain this entry among others for the year 1633: "James Thomson and Elizabeth his wife: were Admitted." As a freeman in 1634, Thompson subscribed "Town Orders" for Woburn. He then moved to Woburn, where he was chosen one of the first Board of Selectmen.[2] After the death of his wife Elizabeth in 1643,[3] he married Susanna Blodgett of Cambridge.[4] Although no notice of his death is contained in the Woburn *Records*, it is generally held that he died in 1682 at the advanced age of eighty-nine.[5] By his first wife it is supposed that he had three sons, all probably born in England.[6] From this James Thompson, the novelist was seventh in descent.[7]

Daniel P. Thompson's life-long interest in the Revolutionary War may have been partly derived from family tradition, for his grandfather fell in the battle of Lexington. A local account of this skirmish has been pre-

[1] In this connection, see L. Thompson, *Memorial of James Thompson of Charlestown, Mass., 1630–1642, and of Woburn, Mass., 1642–1682, and of Eight Generations of his Descendants*, pp. 9, 10. Hotton's *Lists* are admittedly inadequate for Winthrop's colony; the editor himself says in the Introduction to his book (p. 31), "It cannot be doubted but that other lists were made, but they are either lost, or are among the mass of papers still uncatalogued at the Record Office."

[2] R. Frothingham, *The History of Charlestown, Massachusetts*, p. 82.

[3] Woburn, *Records of Births, Deaths, and Marriages*, p. 190.

[4] L. R. Paige, *History of Cambridge, Mass., 1630–1877, with a Genealogical Register*, p. 489.

[5] See L. Thompson, *Memorial of James Thompson*, p. 13.

[6] The youngest of these sons, Jonathan, was the great-great-grandfather of Sir Benjamin Thompson, better known as Count Rumford. This famous scientist was a cousin of Daniel Thompson of Woburn, grandfather of the novelist, and an intimate boyhood friend of Josiah Pierce, 3d, who married a daughter of the aforesaid Daniel Thompson. In his letters to Pierce from abroad Count Rumford does not refer to his cousin, nor is it likely that he ever knew of the existence of his great nephew, the future novelist.

[7] See Appendix C for genealogy.

served,[1] which contains several references to members of the Thompson family:

Before daybreak, on the morning of that day [April 19, 1775], the citizens of Woburn had been notified of the march of the British troops towards Lexington with hostile intent, by means of special messengers, beat of drum, etc. At the receipt of this intelligence, while some stayed behind, to protect their terrified families, or to convey them to places of greater safety, others, in large numbers, hastened to Lexington, not in military array, but promiscuously, armed or unarmed, by the road, or across the fields as happened to be most convenient, to the defense and aid of their countrymen in that hour of peril. There is a tradition that as the Woburn men crossed the fields on their way to Lexington, on the 19th. of April, the winter rye waved like grass before the wind; indicating that to be an unusually forward season. Of those who thus went from Woburn, two did not return, viz.: Mr. Asahel Porter . . .; and Mr. Daniel Thompson, brother of Samuel Thompson, Esq., who was killed by the enemy in their retreat from Concord. They were both young men of promise; and the following notice of their funerals is extracted from a recent reprint of a sheet published at that period, giving accounts of the Lexington fight, taken from E. Russell's Salem Gazette, or Newbury and Marblehead Advertiser of April 21, April 25, and May 5. "Same day [Friday, April 21] the remains of Mess^rs Azel Porter and Daniel Thompson, of Woburn, who also fell victims to tyranny, were decently interred at that place, attended to the grave by a multitude of persons, who assembled on the occasion from that and the neighboring towns: Before they were interred, a very suitable sermon and prayer was delivered by the Rev. Mr. Sherman."

Another reference to Daniel Thompson is to be found in the diary of his brother, Samuel Thompson, Esq., an important man in Woburn, and a lieutenant in the French War.[2] His diary shows that, on his return from

[1] S. Sewall, *The History of Woburn*, p. 361.

[2] *Ibid.*, Appendix.

Lake George in 1758, he stayed with Daniel at "Uncle James Thompson's place" (Brimfield) on the night of November fourth. Daniel was then a young man of twenty-four. Two years later he married Phoebe Snow of Woburn, and his daughter became the wife of Josiah Pierce, 3d. But he also left a son, Daniel Thompson, Jr. It is with Daniel Thompson, Jr., father of the novelist, that we are first concerned.

Little is known of the novelist's father except that he was born in Woburn on August 13, 1765, married Rebecca Parker of Malden on October 15, 1789,[1] and settled for a while in business in Charlestown. Born in the same state of life, and to the same conditions of labor as those of his ancestors for several generations, he appears to have been frugal, industrious, practical, but not intellectually inclined. He was only ten years old when the death of his father in the conflict at Lexington left him an orphan. Though deeply moved at the event, he was probably too young to realize his loss. Thus afflicted in childhood, he never received more than a common-school education, which consisted in those days of reading, spelling, writing, and elementary arithmetic. Indeed, we have no positive evidence that he even attended grammar school, but assume that it is unlikely that a boy could grow up in Woburn without some training at a time when the Reverend Josiah Sherman, the minister of Thompson's parish, supervised the village school and looked after fatherless children. Daniel Thompson, Jr., seems, however, never to have risen above the position of small tradesman or farmer. An

[1] *Births, Marriages, and Deaths in the town of Malden, Mass., 1649–1850.* Under Marriages: "Rebecca Parker of Malden m. Daniel Thompson of Woburn. Rev. E. Willis. Oct. 15, 1789." The Woburn *Records* give May 10, 1787, as the date of marriage, but this is evidently an error.

extremely practical man, he distrusted "high learning," which lures young men away from work into the professions, only to become "idlers" and "sharpers."[1] It was not until after his marriage that he moved from Woburn to the neighboring village of Charlestown.

In the last decade of the eighteenth century Charlestown was a small township of some three hundred dwelling houses mainly on the southern and western slopes of Bunker Hill.[2] Timothy Dwight, in his *Travels in New-England*, commented favorably on its delightful situation, but lamented the fact that it had never been properly surveyed: the streets were formed without the least regard to regularity. This he rightly attributed to lack of foresight on the part of the proprietors under whose direction the town was rebuilt after the disastrous fire of 1775. The houses, of course, were all new, "many of them good, and some handsome." His opinion of the people was not very favorable: "The inhabitants of Charlestown are not a little divided in their parochial, town, and public concerns; and this division prevents much of the pleasure of life, which might otherwise be found in so charming a spot. There is less friendliness to learning and education, in Charlestown, than a traveler would naturally expect."[3] From the purely economic point of view, however, the outlook at this time was certainly encouraging. The post-Revolutionary industrial depression, which had been so sharply accentuated by the controversy over

[1] D. P. Thompson, *Locke Amsden*, pp. 15, 16. In Mr. Amsden the novelist described his own father.

[2] Massachusetts Census of 1764 gives the number of houses as 289, of families, 375. The first U. S. Census (1790) shows a population of 1589.

[3] T. Dwight, *Travels in New-England and New-York* (London ed., 1823), i, 426, 437.

shipping with Great Britain, had now largely disappeared. Moreover, Charlestown had been brought nearer to Boston by the building of the Charles River Bridge in 1785. Again, the making of morocco was revived in 1796. And finally, we are informed that the establishment of the Navy Yard at Charlestown, in 1798, "gave quite an impetus to business generally, especially the building trades." [1] It is interesting to notice that the population of Charlestown almost doubled between 1790 and 1800.

It was during this period that Daniel Thompson, Jr., and his young wife lived in the village, occupying a house at the foot of Bunker Hill.[2] Here, on October 1, 1795, Daniel was born, and here he passed the first five years of his life. For three generations the name Daniel appears to have been a favorite one in the Thompson family, but the third Daniel is also given a middle name, evidently after his uncle, Josiah Pierce. Of his early boyhood, unfortunately, we have no record. The only allusion to this period is to be found in the biographical memoir which he wrote in 1854 for the Duyckinck *Cyclopedia*, where he tells us that his grandmother gave him a silver dollar which he later used to buy a ewe. All that we know concerning the family during their residence in Charlestown is that the father was unsuccessful in business, and purchased from a pioneer named Lovell, a direct descendant of Lovell, the Indian fighter, a farm of a few acres on the Winooski River [3] at Berlin in the state of Vermont. In 1800 he moved to this farm,

[1] J. Winsor, *History of Boston*, iii, 81 and 556, 557.

[2] Duyckinck, *Cyclopedia*, i, 944. This account is taken mainly from the novelist's biographical memoir prepared for this cyclopedia.

[3] Known also as the Onion River. Winooski is the original Indian name, meaning Onion Land River. See *History of Montpelier*, p. 10.

with his wife and four children, Fanny, Charlotte, Daniel, and Rebecca. The oldest daughter was now ten years old; the youngest, three. Daniel was five years old.

Many other families were emigrating at this time from Massachusetts and Connecticut to the frontiers of northern New England and New York. This movement really had its beginning as far back as the French War, when colonial troops, mustered from New England farms, saw in the great wilderness of New Hampshire and New York almost unlimited opportunities for exploitation.[1] It later received a decided impetus from the economic depression which came in the wake of the Revolutionary War. "Fifty years ago," remarked a Vermonter in 1834,

> I lost nearly all I was worth, by the great depreciation of the old Continental paper money which followed the close of the Revolutionary War. . . . I posted off to the city and got my continental rags changed to silver, before they grew any worse; and seeking out a land proprietor in the new State of Vermont, I soon struck a bargain with him for three hundred acres for two hundred dollars, paid him on the spot, and came home with the deeds, maps of the country, etc., in my pocket, together with a surplus of one hundred dollars to get me to, and start me upon, my new purchase.[2]

That this was not an exceptional case is shown by the history of almost any typical frontier settlement of the time.

In order to visualize the state of northern Vermont in 1800, it is well to look back some fifteen years to the

[1] R. Robinson, *Vermont, a Study of Independence*, pp. 49–52. See also J. T. Adams, *Revolutionary New England*, chaps. 11 and 12.

[2] D. P. Thompson, *Centeola and Other Tales*, pp. 169, 170. The story of the starving settlers, from which the above quotation is taken, is based on an account given to Thompson by James Marsh, the first settler of Waterbury, Vt.

earliest settlements. The following description of a journey to the Winooski River in 1784 gives an essentially faithful picture of the conditions of travel and the nature of the country encountered by the first pioneers, who blazed the way for later settlers like Thompson. The speaker is James Marsh, who moved with his wife and eight children into Waterbury in June, 1784, and who during that whole year was the only settler there.

Within one week we were all, with the team and driver hired for the purpose, on our way to the last settlement, in the direction of the place where I was to establish my forest home; within another, having got my family into comfortable quarters, I was, with pack, gun, and axe, making my way through the pathless forest towards the locality of my land, which though over thirty miles distant, I succeeded in reaching that day before sunset. I found my land, as I was told I should, lying on the east bank of the Onion River, and embracing a noble expanse of forest meadow-land, bounded north and south by two considerable streams, that here came in on the same side of the river, and less than a mile apart. Here, lodging in my bark-covered shanty, alone in the wilderness, with no white inhabitant within thirty miles of me on one side, I worked through the whole of that long summer and autumn, cut down, burned, and cleared up ten acres of forest, built a comfortable log-house, laid up, in part, by the timely assistance of some transient land-lookers, and then as winter approached, returned to my family in the settlements.

Being now with my family again, I cheerfully worked through the winter for what I could get, bought a stout horse, and made other preparations for an early removal in the spring to our new home in the woods. And, accordingly, when May came, with my wife and our two youngest on the horse, in addition to the bag of meal, bedding and clothing, with which the strong beast was loaded down, and myself, with pot and kettles, filled with seed corn, salt, plates, knives, and forks, slung on my back, and gun and axe in my hands, and with all my older children placed in a row behind me, we, early one morning, commenced our toilsome journey through

the wilderness. Not being able to get through with all our encumbrances in one day, we halted at dark, threw up a bough shanty, and under it, with a fire at our feet, all slept soundly, except myself who kept awake to be on my guard against the wolves and catamounts, which were often heard howling in the woods round our camp, and once came so near it, that I could see their eyes gleaming in the light of our camp fire. It was a hard journey for us throughout; but we got safely to our new home the next day; and notwithstanding our fatigues, we all felt very happy and grateful. Our long dreaded journey was over, and we thought our hardships at an end, happily blind to the terrible trials we were destined yet to encounter.[1]

Not the least of these "terrible trials" was the extreme difficulty of getting an adequate supply of food. For although the woods abounded with moose, deer, and smaller game, and the streams with trout and small bass, the first settlers of northern Vermont sometimes found it necessary to make distant journeys for grain, meal, flour, and other provisions. In those days a main base of supplies for this region was Albany, whence grain was sent overland to Lake Champlain, and then up the lake on a sloop to a settlement which later became Burlington. Thus a settler living in the vicinity of the Winooski River, in what is now known as Washington County, — say, at Waterbury or Montpelier, — would be compelled to journey a distance of thirty miles or more to reach the lake. Let us recur to the experiences of James Marsh of Waterbury.

[1] This account of Marsh's journey is taken from *Centeola and Other Tales*. See also Thompson's *History of Montpelier*, pp. 54, 55. The accuracy of this description of pioneer conditions in Vermont is questioned by Mr. H. H. Eddy in his M. A. thesis on Daniel P. Thompson. Mr. Eddy believes that Thompson tended to sentimentalize the past, and hence to exaggerate the hardships of the pioneer settlers. Admittedly this is a weakness of most elderly men. But comparison of Thompson's account with those given in the various histories of the period does not warrant us in questioning its *essential* truthfulness. See page 13, note 1.

Having hewn out a clearing on the east bank of the Winooski River, built a cabin, and planted corn, this hardy pioneer found within a month after his arrival that his breadstuffs were getting low, and decided to make a journey over the mountains to Lake Champlain for a fresh supply. At the Burlington settlement he learned from Gideon King, the leading man of the village, that there were no breadstuffs to be had in the place; but, being assured that a sloop which had been dispatched to the south end of the lake to take on a supply of provisions coming overland from Albany would return within five days, he decided to wait. But when the sloop failed to appear within the allotted time, he became uneasy, and only after being assured that the delay was not serious, did he agree to wait another day. That night, however, he dreamed that he was back with his family in their cabin on the Winooski River; that the supply of fresh game and fish he had left with them had been exhausted; that his oldest daughter had attempted to catch a trout for breakfast and had failed; and that night had now come round again. He was with his family at their supper of Indian johnny-cake and water, and soon after saw his wife bar the door for the night. Soon, in this dream, a large black bear cautiously leading two cubs broke into a shed at the rear of the cabin, and devoured the remaining stock of flour, which had been left in a chest somewhat carelessly covered with a roll of peeled spruce bark.

The following day passed slowly as he vainly awaited the arrival of the sloop. At night he dreamed again of his family, and this time saw his wife and children actually prostrated from hunger. When he awoke, he decided to return to his home immediately. He set out at

dawn, and, after trudging thirty miles or more over the Green Mountains, emerged into his clearing at twilight, utterly exhausted. When he entered his cabin, he found his wife pale and emaciated, almost too weak to move; his children "lay feebly moaning and sobbing on their pallets." He immediately gave them some gin, started a fire, hung over it a pot of water, took down his gun, and went out into the woods for game. He luckily brought down a moose in short order, cut off a piece of the hind quarter, and returned with it to the cabin. As soon as his children saw the moose meat hanging from his hands, they "all came hastily tottering and crawling" to his feet, and "clutched the meat with tooth and nail, as though they would have gulped it down raw." The father, however, took the meat from them, shredded it, boiled it in the pot of water he had heated, and fed them the broth with a spoon.[1]

This incident is cited as an extreme, not as a typical, example of the hardships of the original settlers of northern Vermont. The early history of Montpelier, like that of Waterbury, is really the story of the first settlers; at Montpelier the story turns on the action and movements of Colonel Davis and his family. This pioneer arrived in 1787.[2] For two years the only permanent settler, he made a clearing in the wilderness, erected a log-house, planted corn, and surveyed the site of the

[1] As it was Thompson's habit to take written notes of his conversations with old settlers, we can be reasonably certain that in the story of "The Starving Settlers" he has given us a fairly accurate account of what Marsh told him. Marsh, however, related these incidents many years after their occurrence; it is well, therefore, to allow for exaggeration on his part.

[2] The standard history of Montpelier is that by D. P. Thompson. It is invaluable because based directly on original sources, such as the testimony of the first settlers themselves, as well as on original documents. Our brief account of the settlement is drawn mainly from chapter 2 of Thompson's *History*.

future town. Other families followed, and the settlement proceeded rapidly. Public roads were constructed, further tracts of forest were cut down, a sawmill was built and then a gristmill, frame houses were erected, and a tavern was opened. In 1790 the first United States Census showed that the population of the town numbered one hundred and eighteen persons, and by 1800 it had increased to nearly nine hundred. Not far from Montpelier another settlement, really an outpost, was developing almost as rapidly. Berlin township in 1800 had grown from a mere clearing to a community of nearly seven hundred persons.[1]

It was at this time that Daniel Thompson, Jr., arrived. He found a hilly country covered with recently settled farms. Thus he did not enter a wilderness. But conditions were primitive enough even in 1800. The land (good for grazing) was still in a low state of cultivation, and this must have made farming a hard struggle. Travelling through this region six years later, Timothy Dwight observed that the houses along the Winooski River were "sensibly inferior" to those which he had seen in any other part of Vermont, where the cultivation was equally advanced.[2] He was impressed with the newness of the settlement, and surprised to find that the inhabitants had already built a church — a fact, we might add, which shows more of their character than almost any other that could be cited.

The Thompson farm was situated in the northeastern part of the township of Berlin, on the Stevens Branch of the Winooski River, about two or three miles from

[1] U. S. Census for 1790 and 1800. See also T. Dwight, *Travels in New-England*, ii, 436, and D. P. Thompson, *History of Montpelier*, p. 82.

[2] T. Dwight, *op. cit.*, ii, 436.

Montpelier.[1] The Stevens Branch got its name from the curious fate of a rejected lover who had sought solitude in this region. Stevens went out on the river in early autumn, and nothing more was heard of him till the following spring, when two hunters who happened to pass that way found his body near his camp and gave it burial. He had evidently become exhausted from brooding and privation, and had died by the stream in a last effort to catch a fish. In 1806 Daniel Thompson, Jr., while ploughing in his field, discovered Stevens's corpse. Young Daniel, then a boy of eleven, remembered and recorded this incident (the earliest of which we have record) more than fifty years later, when writing his history of Montpelier.

> I, then a small boy, was present on the occasion, and the sensation which the sight of these remains, as they were thrown out by the deep furrow that was made lengthwise through them, with the rust-eaten jack-knife lying in the midst, palpable to view, caused it to become one of the most vivid of my early recollections, and subsequently led me to make minute inquiries of the oldest settlers in all that related to the unfortunate hunter.[2]

The surroundings of Thompson's boyhood were such as to develop practical and hardy qualities; the labors of the farm, when a farm was little more than a clearing, were likely to allow but slight leisure for recreation. Fishing and hunting were the boy's natural amusements; and to handle a horse or a boat, to travel alone and without fear the trackless forest, became matters of course. Of moral training Daniel had the best kind in

[1] D. P. Thompson, *History of Montpelier*, pp. 12, 13, and 113. See also Duyckinck, *Cyclopedia*, i, 944.

[2] *History of Montpelier*, pp. 12, 13.

the example of his mother, to whose devotion and religious influence he later pays a beautiful tribute in *Locke Amsden.*

Daniel appears to have been a sturdy boy, active, adventurous, and restlessly trying to peer beyond the horizon of his father's farm. Curiously enough, he never entered Montpelier till he was twelve years old. This visit opened a new world to his observing eyes, and more than fifty years later he was able to describe minutely the village as it then appeared. With some other boys, among them possibly his younger brother, Joseph, he went to the village to witness his first real Fourth of July celebration. The bridge across the North Branch having been swept away by the flood of the previous spring, visitors were riding through the stream on horses, or in carts and wagons. The barefoot boys merely rolled up their trousers over their knees and waded across. The point of attraction was the new State House grounds, for Montpelier was now the capital of Vermont. On their way they passed a broad meadow in which two lines of stakes were marked out.

"What in the world are all those stakes for, setting up so straight and curious, all in a row there?" asked one of the older, out-of-town boys. "Those stakes? Why they are to show where we are to have a new hansome street from the new State House right across the Branch, with a fine, elegant new bridge," replied a village boy, pricking up with pride at the thought.[1]

When the boys reached the State House grounds, they found that the exercises were to be held on the ground work of the new capitol, the foundation walls of which were all up. A great throng of visitors had been

[1] *History of Montpelier*, p. 109.

attracted to witness the first general public celebration of the Fourth of July in Montpelier. The exercises included an oration by one Paul Dean, a Universalist minister from Boston who at that time was preaching in different parts of the township. In the audience gathered about the speaker's platform that hot July morning stood Daniel Pierce Thompson, a sturdy boy of twelve, clad in homespun tow cloth, eagerly listening to the first oration he had ever heard. Exactly twenty years later he was himself the orator of the day.

This taste of village life must have stimulated the boy to further interest in the world beyond his father's farm. To be sure, the opportunity to go to the village probably did not present itself very often. But when we next hear of him he is back in Montpelier to join in the celebration of the first Election Day. The election occurred in September, 1808. The new State House had just been completed, and visitors were flocking in from all the neighboring country. To Daniel the military pomp and ceremony of the occasion must have been thrilling; and how vividly the impressions of that exciting day were engraved on his memory, the following reminiscence will show.

> We and a lot of other boys were standing in the street somewhere against our present Court House, when, sudden as the bursting of a thunder clap, the whole village shook with the explosion of the cannon on the State House common. We all instantly ran at the top of our speed for the spot. When we had got about half way there, we met a gang of other boys from one of the back towns, who, taken by surprise and seized with panic at the stunning shock, were fleeing for their lives in the opposite direction; but gaining a little assurance from seeing us rushing towards the scene of their fright, one, braver than the rest, stopped short, boldly faced about and exclaimed

"Hoo! I an't a n'attom afraid!" and all now joining in the race, we were, in another minute, within a few rods of the smoking gun, which had been discharged on the announcement of the election of Isaac Titchenor as Governor. The next moment our attention was attracted by the voice of Israel P. Dana, sheriff of the county, standing on the upper terrace of the State House, and loudly proclaiming — "Hear ye! hear ye! hear ye! the honorable Paul Brigham has been elected Lieutenant Governor, in and over the State of Vermont, by the suffrages of the freemen. God save the people." Then another discharge of the piece saluted our recoiling ears and sent its sharp echoes from side to side between the encircling hills. Then came the announcement of the election of Benjamin Swan as Treasurer, followed by a third gun; then the last announcement of the election of the Councillors, followed by a fourth gun; then, without further official announcements, the salute of the guns was continued till one for each of the states had been fired.[1]

Certain other incidents of this period (of purely local interest), which occurred in February, 1812, in connection with the controversy between the Democrats and the Federalists over the question of the impending war with Great Britain, appear to have left a deep impression on the future novelist. These incidents are described in a reminiscent vein[2] in his *History of Montpelier;* but they possess slight biographical interest.

Brought up on the labors of the farm, Daniel had by his sixteenth year received merely an elementary education at home and from scanty winter attendance at the district school. To his mother's help and encouragement he owed much, as he later gratefully acknowledged; but the fact remains that without books one cannot go very far. In the spring of 1811, however, an incident occurred which was undoubtedly a turning-

[1] *History of Montpelier,* p. 112. [2] *Ibid.,* pp. 113 ff.

point in his life. While walking along the stream that flows through his father's farm, he suddenly noticed a well-soaked volume lying in the wreckage of a recent freshet.[1] How eagerly he must have opened it! And one can readily imagine with what reverence he turned the wet pages when he discovered this book to be a collection of the verses of English poets! That he read this anthology through from cover to cover and lovingly memorized favorite passages may readily be surmised from the frequency with which he later quotes them. And the passages which he then admired he later found to be the world's favorite verses, "a fact," he has remarked, "which taught him a lesson of respect for the opinions of the uncultivated, by which he has often profited."

Now, intent upon procuring an education, Daniel faced the problem of raising enough money to continue his studies in preparation for college. It appears from *Locke Amsden*, a semi-autobiographical novel, that Daniel had already far outdistanced the local schoolmaster, who dreaded his questions so much that he resigned.[2] It is said that the school board of Berlin found it almost impossible to engage another teacher for the ensuing year, so far had Daniel's reputation as a scholar spread in the neighboring country.[3] This statement, however, must be accepted with caution because of its source. In each instance where we derive our information from

[1] Duyckinck, *Cyclopedia*, i, 944.

[2] *Ibid.* "This work involves no inconsiderable part of the author's autobiography, and is drawn largely from his personal observation." Although *Locke Amsden* thus purports to be largely autobiographical, it is well for us to be cautious in drawing conclusions from an account which is, after all, written in the form of a story, contains fictitious names, and relates certain episodes which may never have happened.

[3] *Locke Amsden*, pp. 31–33.

Locke Amsden, we shall designate its origin, indicating only our belief in its probability, not our acceptance of it as fact. But Daniel had still another difficulty. His father intended him to be a farmer, and felt that the district schooling was sufficient.[1] In this view the elder Thompson merely expressed the general attitude of most farmers of the time. He himself had never received more than a common schooling, nor had he observed the need of further education in managing a farm. Always proud of Daniel, he seems to have treated him fairly enough, although he mentally noted the boy's occasional tendency to daydream when absorbed in mathematical puzzles. And if a little education, he probably reasoned, could make a boy absent-minded and disinclined to routine labor, what might not be the effect on him of further training? Nevertheless, when his son finally succeeded in raising the necessary money to enable him to continue his studies away from home, the father in good faith released him from his labors. And this, it may be added, was an important sacrifice for a parent to make in that place and time.

Meanwhile, Daniel had raised a flock of sixteen sheep as the result of the purchase of the ewe with the silver dollar given him by his grandmother. For their value in the open market he had obtained a pair of two-year-old steers, which he grazed in summer in the woods, free of cost, and, by hiring help, raised to full-grown oxen in a

[1] *Locke Amsden*, pp. 15, 16. When asked if he thought of giving his son an education, Mr. Amsden [Daniel Thompson] made the following reply:

"Education? Why I am giving him one. He attends the district school regularly every winter."

"I meant a public education."

"Then I say, No; I intend him for a farmer."

The picture that Thompson has drawn of his father tallies with other evidence, and seems, as one would expect, very accurate. We shall discuss this matter at greater length in dealing with *Locke Amsden* in chapter V.

couple of years. He had also been hunting mink and muskrat, and from the sale of the skins bought Pike's large arithmetic, a Latin grammar, lexicon, and Virgil. Not being able to pronounce the Latin, he got the help of a Dartmouth graduate who had settled in the village, and paying him thirty-seven and one half cents for three lessons in the language, he succeeded by his own exertions in going through the grammar. He now sold his cattle for seventy-five dollars and a thick, old-fashioned bull's-eye watch, and after being fitted out with a home-spun wardrobe by his mother, he set out in September, 1815, to the house of a clergyman, some thirty miles distant, where he intended to prepare for college. How earnestly he applied himself to his studies is shown by his reading the whole of Virgil in twelve weeks. He spent the winter of 1815–1816 in "boarding round" as a schoolmaster in one of the remote districts of northern Vermont, and then, during the following summer, he helped his father and Joseph in the labors of the farm.

Now more eager than ever to continue his education, Daniel, one day in early autumn, set out on foot for the Randolph-Danville Academy, which was situated in the village of Danville, about twenty-five miles from Berlin. Here, according to *Locke Amsden*, he was happy to find one of his former teachers, a young college graduate, who now became his preceptor.[1] By the advice of this

[1] *Locke Amsden*, p. 47. The name of this teacher, Seaver, is apparently fictitious, but his existence is entirely credible, and the course of study here described corresponds to that which Thompson actually pursued. It is to be observed that in respect of Thompson's early training *Locke Amsden* is probably accurate in many details (see the article in Duyckinck's *Cyclopedia*). In general, we are inclined to accept tentatively much of the novelist's description of his own experience as student and teacher as essentially true, but we offer as biography only that which can be substantiated — and that is relatively a small part. See chapter V for matters of biographical interest, but without biographical validity.

teacher, he devoted his time chiefly to the acquisition of Greek and Latin, but spent his leisure hours in studying "such of the higher branches of English education as he had never had an opportunity of acquiring." [1] Having already disciplined himself to strict habits of concentration when studying alone on the farm, he found that what he mainly needed at this time was guidance. We learn from *Locke Amsden* that, although he consulted his teacher perhaps less than anyone in the school, he yet outstripped all the other students in the rapidity of his progress. Indeed, young Thompson's teacher is reported to have said at the end of the year that he had never known so great an amount of knowledge acquired in so short a period.[2] Whether this statement can be accepted as literal fact or not, is entirely immaterial; it is a fact, as later records show, that at this time Thompson must have made remarkable progress.

It is not surprising that a young man of this type should return to teaching, with the avowed purpose of "imparting to others the knowledge which had afforded him so much happiness in acquiring." [3] We are compelled, for lack of verifiable evidence, to pass over Thompson's relatively brief career as a district schoolteacher, interesting as it is, with the brief comment that he made use of the opportunity which it gave him to study human nature, and thus, perhaps quite unconsciously, to acquire a knowledge of the people and country of rural Vermont that later proved of great value to him in writing his novels. For an interesting account of this period of Thompson's life, the reader is referred to *Locke Amsden*, which, as we have already

[1] *Locke Amsden*, p. 47. Cf. Duyckinck, i, 944.
[2] *Locke Amsden*, p. 47. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 47, 48.

noted, is largly autobiographical. Suffice it to say that he appears to have taught in the district schools during the two succeeding winters, and to have assisted his father on the farm in the intervening summers. He had thus saved enough money by approximately 1817 to enter Middlebury College.

The fact that Thompson went to Middlebury rather than to Dartmouth or to the University of Vermont, both of which were nearer his home, was probably due to the influence of two Middlebury graduates with whom he must have been in contact during the period of his preparation.[1] One of these was the Reverend Chester Wright, pastor of the Congregational Church at Montpelier, which Thompson probably attended, and of which he later became a member. The Reverend Mr. Wright had been graduated from Middlebury in 1805, and served as a trustee of the college from 1819 until his death in 1840. The other person who probably influenced young Thompson was William Perrin, son of one of the early settlers of Berlin. Perrin was graduated from Middlebury in 1812, and three years later married Fanny Thompson, an older sister of the future novelist. Other considerations may have influenced Thompson's choice, but these two seem important.

In his autobiographical memoir Thompson tells us that he passed the examinations for the sophomore class late in the scholastic year, thus spending little more than two years at Middlebury. This statement cannot be verified because the college has no record beyond that of granting his degree in 1820. From the known fact of his poverty, however, it seems entirely credible that he entered college at about the time that he says he did.

[1] H. H. Eddy, *The Life and Works of Daniel Pierce Thompson*. This is an unpublished M. A. thesis submitted at Middlebury College, 1927.

Although Thompson was not the oldest member of his class, he was undoubtedly more mature than the average student. He thus brought greater experience and insight to his tasks, and, from the very nature of his preparation, probably saw greater opportunities for self-cultivation. The college at this time had only two buildings, one of which had just been erected; the number of students could not have exceeded one hundred and twenty; and the faculty consisted of but four professors. Courses were given in languages, both ancient and modern, mathematics, natural philosophy, law, and theology. In 1818 there was no professor of chemistry or of "rhetoric and English literature." The latter subject was not introduced into the curriculum until 1838.[1] No doubt a thorough study of Greek and Latin formed the backbone of the course. The college library consisted of several thousand volumes, and young Thompson made good use of it, for he tells us that he read extensively, with close attention to English composition. And it is but natural to suppose that the distinctly religious atmosphere of this typically New England college strengthened the unaffected piety that marked his later career.

During his two years or more at Middlebury, Thompson is said to have published some essays and tales in local periodicals.[2] Unfortunately, this first literary work has not been preserved. In fact, the earliest writing of his that can be positively identified at the present day is the brief article on Montpelier (signed "D. P. T.") which appeared in Zadock Thompson's *Gazetteer of Ver-*

[1] S. Swift, *History of Middlebury*, pp. 384, 385; see also, for a description of the college, Dwight's *Travels*, ii, 419.

[2] See Duyckinck, *Cyclopedia*, i, 944; also, chapter II, p. 35, of this monograph.

mont (1824). It is significant, however, that he actually experimented in writing while still in college, for it indicates the direction of his interests. In view of his later application to law, it would be helpful to know if he began his legal studies before leaving Middlebury.

Although the future novelist studied hard at college, he gained perhaps quite as much from nature as from books. How far the influence of natural objects had affected him during these formative years is charmingly described in the following passage from an address that he delivered in 1850 at the semi-centennial celebration of Middlebury College.

> About thirty years ago, a poor untutored, unfriended boy, who had never seen books but in visions, whose almost every merit, indeed, consisted in
>
> The dream, the thirst, the wild desire,
> Delirious yet divine — to know —
>
> found his way out of the woods to Middlebury College. And during his residence here, having been inured to the active habits, which a boyhood life on a farm in a new part of the country naturally engender, and which cannot be thrown off; and being, withal, an enthusiastic admirer of nature in her more undisturbed retreats, he wandered, in his vacation and leisure days, over nearly every square mile of the surrounding region from the third Falls of the Otter upwards to its mouth, — from the margin of the beautiful Champlain, westward, to the summit of the towering Green Mountains, eastward, pausing, in his solitary rapture, over its picturesque scenes of hill and dale, lake and river, and taking mental daguerreotypes of them all.
>
> These, in after days, gradually grouped themselves around the seat of his Alma Mater, which had made him intellectually what he was, — which had drawn to itself his fond and clustering associations and which, therefore, became the bright centre-piece of a thus curiously composed ideal picture.

The impresses of such scenes, — drawn by the glowing pencil of youthful fancy upon the fresh, unvexed ground-work of youthful feeling, and kept bright by such associations, — are prone to occupy a prominent place in the mind of the maturer man, to be constantly struggling up to the light, and forcing themselves upon the view of others. They did so, at least, in his case; and in subsequently devoting his leisure to the composition of a literary work, illustrative of the Revolutionary action and early settlement of his own loved Vermont, he laid the scene in this section of the country; because, while his general purposes would be equally well thus subserved, it would afford him, besides the advantages of eye drawn description, an opportunity, a gratifying opportunity, to bring out many of his long cherished pictures.

The almost total lack of documentary evidence makes it impossible clearly to trace Thompson's movements between the time of his graduation from Middlebury in 1820 and his appearance in Montpelier in 1824. According to his own memoir, he obtained, through the friendship of Professor Keith [1] of the Virginia Theological Seminary, an appointment as private tutor in a wealthy family in Virginia. As Professor Keith was a tutor at Middlebury during 1816 and 1817, it is highly probable that the two men became acquainted in college. But Thompson tells us in his memoir that he entered Middlebury as a sophomore "late in the scholastic year." This would have made it impossible for him to have met Keith if the latter had become a priest immediately upon the completion of his work at Middlebury. Possibly Thompson entered college late in the freshman

[1] For records of Reuel Keith see *General Catalogue of Middlebury College, 1800–1900*, pp. 19, 50; Caverly, *History of Pittsford, Vt.* (1872), pp. 270, 280; and Hemenway's *Vermont Gazetteer*, ii, 378. After leaving Middlebury, Keith entered the priesthood of the Episcopal Church; later he taught at the College of William and Mary in Virginia, and then at the Virginia Theological Seminary at Alexandria.

year, or possibly he met Keith elsewhere. It seems unlikely that he would have said in his memoir that he entered as a sophomore, if he had spent the usual four years at college. Then, too, a friend at Middlebury may have obtained, by correspondence, Keith's recommendation for Thompson. At any rate, we know that he actually did go to Virginia, and that he remained there three or four years. During this period he studied law, and in 1823 was admitted to the inferior and superior courts of the state.[1]

We have no further record of him in Virginia, except his own account of an interview with Thomas Jefferson.[2] During the summer of 1822, Thompson, wishing to visit the buildings of the University of Virginia, then going up at Charlottesville, and also to have an interview with the famous statesman, procured a letter of introduction and presented himself at Monticello.

"That is Mr. Jefferson," said the superintendent of grounds when he saw Thompson's letter—

"That is Mr. Jefferson whom you see yonder, taking the chisel from the hand of an Italian sculptor and showing him how to turn a volute of the capital on which he is engaged."

"Why, does Mr. Jefferson go into sculpture in so practical a manner as that?" I asked in some surprise.

"Yes," was the reply; "yes, often, when he detects faulty work. Indeed we consider him the best workman on the ground. But here he comes. I will introduce you. . . ."

Mr. Jefferson — a tall, straight, sandy-complexioned man, wearing a coat of Virginia cloth, surmounting a buff vest and broadcloth breeches — advanced with an elastic step and serene countenance, when I was introduced, and greeted [me]

[1] Duyckinck, *Cyclopedia*, i, 945. I attribute the discrepancies between Thompson's memoir and other records to lapse of memory. Thompson was mentally honest. Not even a desire to make romance of his early struggles could have impelled him to make deliberate misstatements.

[2] *Harper's Magazine*, xxvi, 833, "A Talk with Thomas Jefferson."

with the sweet, winning smile which so peculiarly distinguished him, and which, doubtless, was one of the secrets of his great personal popularity and magnetic power over all whom he would conciliate.

"You will dine with me at Monticello today, I trust," he said. "I must ride down the river a couple of miles, to see to the repairing of the foundation of my mills there. . . . But I shall return to meet you at the dinner table."

So saying, he, though then about eighty years of age, mounted the young blooded horse now led up for him, with the agility of a boy, and galloped away to his destination.

Thompson now describes briefly the mansion of Monticello, its museum, picture-gallery, and library; he writes reminiscently of the plain Virginia dinner presided over by Jefferson, of his meeting with Jefferson's grandchildren, the Master and Misses Randolph, who were present, and of Jefferson's leading him away from the table to the eastern portico, in the shade, where he bade him be seated, with the remark that he had "finished his labors and studies for the day, and had now nothing to do but talk." Thompson assures us that he kept careful notes of the conversation, which ranged over a variety of topics such as Patrick Henry, slavery, and the proposed plans for the University of Virginia. As Jefferson's views on education are too well known to need further comment, let us turn immediately to his remarks on Patrick Henry. The subject was brought up when Jefferson pointed out the old home of the famous orator near the foot of the eminence.

"It is indeed an object of interest to me, Sir," said Thompson. "It would be so at *any* time; and it is especially so at this, as I have just been reading Wirt's *Life of Henry;* and I shall have the opportunity of ascertaining from one, who is so competent a judge, how far my impression that the biography was overcolored is well grounded."

"In some respects it doubtless *is* overcolored, but in others scarcely up to what was the reality. Mr. Wirt makes Mr. Henry a statesman and a lawyer; neither of these was true. Henry was a bold and sincere patriot, but no statesman. And his opinion on a law point was absolutely not worth one single brass farthing. But to the effect of his oratory, Mr. Wirt has hardly done justice. His power over an audience was wonderful, and to myself, I confess, almost incomprehensible. Men were frenzied under his appeals, and seemed to become the mere machines of his will. I have never witnessed anything like it either in Europe or in America. And I doubt whether there ever was in America any such exhibition of the power of a speaker over an audience, with the exception, perhaps, of Whitfield, the greatest pulpit orator, doubtless, of all modern times. And Henry, like Whitfield, should have been a preacher. Had he been one, he would have been a prodigy. But what, you will ask, was the secret of this singular power? That is a question which, among thinking men, has before been often asked, but never to my mind satisfactorily answered. It certainly was not from any peculiar richness of thought or force of his ideas; for his speeches when analyzed by the thinking hearer, as soon as he could divest himself of the peculiar effect of their delivery, were seen to amount to but very little. I have myself sat and listened to one of his speeches with a strange thrill of pleasure, yielded myself voluntarily to the influence, shut up my eyes, and sat it out to the end like one in a trance, and then, as I aroused myself from the thrall, I have asked myself, *Now what has the man said to produce such an effect, even to myself, guarded as I was.* But I never could tell. No, that effect was not produced by the force of intellect, but the faculty of completely seizing the sympathies of the hearers, or rather perhaps some magnetic power over them, which was the peculiar gift of the man, and which has been rarely or never possessed by any individual, to the same extent, in this country before. Henry was no scholar, and read scarcely anything. I recollect he, one fall, came up here, and saying he had been thinking he would read some during the approaching winter, asked me to lend him a book. I lent him a volume of Hume's *Essays*. He brought it back

the next spring, when I asked him if he had read it? 'No,' he replied, 'I tried to read it two or three times, but I could never get through more than a page or so before I fell asleep!'"

Thompson now alluded to the state convention which had been called in Virginia, in part to provide for the gradual abolishment of slavery, and asked Jefferson what Henry's attitude would be toward slavery, if he were now alive.

"Where would Henry be found, if alive, at this crisis would you ask? It would require no gift of prophecy in me to answer that question. He would be found with those with whom, side by side, he once labored in the matter so strenuously — Mr. Madison, myself, and many others of Virginia's most enlightened statesmen. Henry was, at that time, even more determined in his opposition to slavery than the rest of us. The Legislature of Virginia, the first of all the States to take any definite anti-slavery action, as early as 1778, through the influence of Patrick Henry and the few leading men who felt like him, and like him had the moral courage to take a bold and decided stand on the subject, abolished the slave traffic in this State by law. And besides the all-important aid Henry contributed to this measure, he caused his opinions and influence to be heeded and felt by the framers of the Constitution of the United States, an influential portion of whom, under the lead of Mr. Madison, thought they had so guarded that instrument that it should never afford the remotest sanction to slavery, but rather invite the after prohibitory action of Congress. And when Congress, in response to our known sentiments, subsequently prohibited the further introduction of slaves after a certain time, Mr. Madison thought, and we all thought, we had effectually accomplished the great desideratum of giving slavery its death blow, or the blow at least under which the institution could only linger a few years to perish from the land, which it had already begun to blight with its malefic influence. But we soon found ourselves sadly mistaken. When the time arrived on which all had counted for its rapid decline, we saw it taking deeper root than ever.

The cupidity of an influential class, taking advantage of the thoughtlessness of other classes, had prevailed. And so it has gone on, till this terrible incubus on the prosperity and the welfare of the South is swelling up to mountain proportions. This of late years has constituted the burden of my anxieties; and last spring I had several conversations with Mr. Madison on the subject, when, finding ourselves perfectly agreed in views and sentiments, we both resolved we would make one more effort before we died to rid our State of this unspeakable evil before forever too late. And the result of our movement was the proposition for the gradual emancipation of all the slaves of Virginia, which is soon to be presented for the action of the approaching State Convention for making all expedient alterations in our Constitution, and which, with the strong backing promised us, we have fondly hoped might be adopted. And yet we should not be too sanguine of such an auspicious result. The same causes that have hitherto led to the defeat of every such movement may again conspire to bring this to the same fate, and we shall be compelled to leave the stage of life with our vistas of the earthly future darkened by the presages of the doom which, if not averted by emancipation, must sooner or later fall, not only on our own beloved State, but the whole South, in the ruin of their people or in the overthrow of their republican liberties, in consequence of the inevitable workings of that most unfortunate institution."

This interview must have left a deep impression on the young man who, as editor of the *Green Mountain Freeman*, was destined to take an active part in the anti-slavery movement in his native state. It is interesting to notice, incidentally, that the account from which we have quoted so freely was published shortly after Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation. And finally, for Thompson to have kept careful notes of the conversation with Jefferson is thoroughly characteristic of him, because, as we shall see, he was to follow this method in obtaining first-hand information from pioneer

settlers in Vermont, survivors of the Revolution, law clients with unusual cases, and other interesting persons whom he subsequently met at Montpelier, or during his various excursions in Vermont, Maine, and New Hampshire.

The termination of Thompson's sojourn in Virginia definitely marks the close of the first main period of his life, that of general education and of specific preparation for his professional career. It is apparent to the reader, however, that this young lawyer had also prepared himself, in some measure at least (and perhaps quite unconsciously), for a literary career. And thus, with his leaving Virginia, the future novelist is ready to emerge from the apprenticeship of early manhood into the fulness of his life work.

CHAPTER II

PROFESSIONAL AND LITERARY CAREER

UPON his return to Montpelier Daniel P. Thompson opened a law office.[1] Now twenty-eight, he had reached an age at which most young men have already established themselves; but he brought to his profession what many younger men lacked — maturity and varied experience. He was never extensively engaged in the practice of law, but within two years was chosen register of probate for Washington County, and thenceforth held various public offices intermittently during a period of some thirty years. Furthermore, he attained a greater reputation outside his profession than in it, owing, as we shall see, to circumstances rather than to choice. Although keenly interested in public affairs, Thompson was a man of retiring disposition. He seems to have had the temperament, not of an advocate, but of a student of the law. Various motives may have impelled him to enter politics, but doubtless the determining consideration was economic. The salary of an office such as that of register of probate or clerk of the legislature, however meagre compared with the income

[1] Thompson went to Virginia in 1820 and returned after "three or four years" — that is, in 1823 or 1824. Although there is no record by which to fix the exact date, an article on Montpelier that he wrote for Zadock Thompson's *Gazetteer of Vermont* E. P. Walton, 1824 is dated September, 1824. In the preface to his own *History of Montpelier* he tells us that in preparation for his article in the *Gazetteer* he visited "the most intelligent survivors of the first settlers of Montpelier." This makes it virtually certain that he was in Montpelier at least as early as September, 1824.

from successful private practice, nevertheless gave definite assurance of a living to a young lawyer without means.

It is quite apparent, however, that the monotonous routine of the register's office could not have been very congenial to a gifted man whose interests ranged from antiquarianism to a love of literature. Recently the county clerk, in looking through the records kept by Thompson as county clerk in 1845, found preserved between the pages of the ponderous volumes a number of specimens of various kinds of plant leaves, of different sizes and shades, crushed flowers, and the like, carefully shellacked on large sheets of white paper. Some of these specimens were labelled "Autumn leaves," and others "Spring leaves." It is not clear whether Thompson prepared them for publication or merely as a hobby, but at any rate it is obvious that his mind was not wholly absorbed by the dull pages before him.

He appears to have had many interests. He studied botany, native folk-lore, local history, and traditions gathered from the reminiscences of older settlers, and apparently read somewhat extensively, more in poetry than in fiction. His favorite recreation was fishing. Local tradition represents him as wandering through the country with his fishing-rod, and stopping to chat with some old settler by the roadside or at a farmhouse door, where he would often spend hours listening to reminiscences of the early settlement of Vermont, of how Ethan Allen "administered the beech seal," of how Warner and Francis met the royal troops at Hubbardton, or of other notable events in the early history of his native state.[1]

[1] See the *Green Mountain Freeman* for July 1, 1868.

Notes taken over a period of years from conversations such as these afterwards provided no small part of the material used by Thompson in writing *The Green Mountain Boys* and *The Rangers*.[1]

In September, 1824, Thompson contributed a brief history of Montpelier to Zadock Thompson's *Gazetteer of Vermont*. This slight historical sketch is in itself unimportant, but its preparation furnished the author with extremely valuable first-hand information concerning the settlement of Berlin and Montpelier, which he later used in his *History of Montpelier*, and which, but for him, would never have been preserved. It is well at the outset to note his method:

> Having, when Zadock Thompson had his Gazetteer of Vermont in preparation, undertaken, at his request, to furnish a brief history of Montpelier, we stated, for the purpose of collecting materials for that task, the most intelligent survivors of the first settlers of Montpelier and the neighboring towns, and made minutes of the facts and incidents which we condensed into the brief sketch of the town that appears in that work, together with many more which the space allowed us would not permit of being introduced. Among the best informed of the men thus consulted were James Sawyer, Col. Cyrus Johnson, Zachariah Perrin, and others of the first settlers of Berlin, Hon. Seth Putnam of Middlesex, and John Taplin, Esq., Clark Stevens, and General Pearly Davis of Montpelier, who were considered the best historians of the first settlement then living.[2]

Although Thompson never took up authorship as a profession, he may have thought of it during his student days at Middlebury. We have already noted that while in college he contributed a few tales and essays to cur-

[1] See the preface to *The Green Mountain Boys*.

[2] *History of Montpelier*, preface, pp. iv, v.

rent periodicals.[1] Unfortunately, these first literary efforts have not been recovered. But if it be true that, while still in college, he contributed to local papers or periodicals, or even merely experimented in writing, we may assume that his interest in literary craftsmanship began long before the circumstances of his career warranted his considering literature as a possible means of livelihood. The fact is that a young man without means was virtually proscribed from the field of literature at the time when Thompson, graduating from Middlebury, looked about for an opening and accepted a tutorship in Virginia. Once entered upon law as a profession, he continued to look upon literary work in the light of an avocation — a somewhat profitable hobby, if you will — even after he had achieved sectional popularity as a writer. He was then a man of forty-four with a family to support. There was never a time when he could afford to abandon the law, which was ever to him a "jealous mistress." [2]

The discouraging situation that confronted Thompson in the early thirties is well described by Park Benjamin in his final statement to the readers of the *New England Magazine* (December, 1835):

Could the American publishers afford, like the English, to pay handsomely for articles, we should soon secure journals

[1] Besides Duyckinck, see also the *Biographical Encyclopedia of Vermont of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 257. This anonymous sketch of Thompson's life contains a number of inaccuracies; the statement therefore that "he contributed liberally to different periodicals" should be taken with caution. The statement is also made that Thompson wrote a few poems, such as "A Fish Line," "The Village" (Montpelier), and "New England." "The Village" is described as "quite an elaborate production." None of these poems has been recovered. The writer has made a careful search both for poems and for stories in the periodicals of that day.

[2] *The Vermont Watchman*, March, 1894; letter from Daniel G. Thompson to the editor, dated March 26.

DANIEL PIERCE THOMPSON

In his young manhood

assuming a different character, and vieing successfully with the best transatlantic productions. . . . There are few educated men in this country who can yield themselves to the pursuits of literature and the liberal studies. With the exception of those whom fortune has placed beyond the necessity of exertion, there are no authors by profession. The efforts of American writers are, for the most part, made in hours of leisure, set aside from the time devoted to their regular business. When a poor man has attempted to live by authorship, he has been compelled to seek a resource from poverty as an instructor or a lecturer, or in some mind-wearying employment. I believe, however, that we shall see better days.

That Thompson did not return to teaching is not surprising in view of his experiences in the inferior district schools of northern Vermont, where he had seen in what slight regard the teacher was held in the community.[1] But the time was still one of instinctive popular respect for ministers and lawyers. In New England a lawyer not only commanded social esteem, but could devote his leisure hours to "the pursuits of literature and the liberal studies."

After three years of service as clerk of the legislature, Thompson received from the governor of Vermont a year's leave of absence for the purpose of compiling a volume of the statute laws.[2] This compilation — a continuation of Slade's *Laws of Vermont* — was written during the year 1834, and was published by the legislature in 1835.[3] This, Thompson's first book, although in no sense a work of original authorship, yet won him recogni-

[1] *Locke Amsden*, pp. 172–176.

[2] Duyckinck, *Cyclopedia*, i, 945.

[3] *The Laws of Vermont, of a public and permanent nature, coming down to and including the year 1834.* Compiled . . . by Daniel P. Thompson. Montpelier: Knapp and Jewett, 1835.

tion as a student of the law, gave him a standing in the community, and introduced his name to a reading public, however limited.

The esteem in which he was held by his fellow citizens of Montpelier was shown as early as 1827, when, as a young lawyer without means or (as yet) influential connections, he was invited to deliver the Fourth of July oration — in those days a much more ceremonious matter than at present. The day was ushered in by the firing of a national salute. At twelve o'clock a procession formed under the direction of the marshal, and, escorted by the Washington Artilley, under the command of Captain Wing, moved from the State House common to the meeting-house, where a "numerous and respectable audience listened with deep interest to the . . . exercises,"[1] which included a prayer by the Reverend Mr. Wright, sacred music, a reading of the Declaration of Independence of the United States and of the State of Vermont, and the oration by D. P. Thompson, Esq. According to a local newspaper account, the orator of the day "eloquently described the feelings and principles of New England." It might be added that Thompson's oration is said to have been in answer to Nathaniel P. Willis's essay on "Vermont and Vermonters."[2] This speech did not appear in print, but from references to Willis in other writings it is clear that Thompson cordially disliked him.[3]

No longer an isolated village, Montpelier had virtually doubled in population since 1800. Daily stages

[1] A brief account of the occasion (from which the above quotation was taken) may be found in the *Watchman and Gazetteer* (Montpelier); other local papers mention the exercises.

[2] *Biog. Encyc. of Vt.*, p. 257.

[3] D. P. Thompson, *The Adventures of Timothy Peacock*, p. 27.

heavily laden with passengers entered the town over the great thoroughfare from Boston to Burlington and Montreal. These stages, drawn by four, and often by six, horses, and finely equipped, were considered the finest ever known in New England.[1] Every other day a stage arrived from Danville, Vermont, and stages came twice a week from other outlying towns. Most of them stopped over night, and all long enough for their passengers to dine. The fact that Montpelier was the seat of the state government also helped to make it something of a focal point for northern Vermont. Although these advantages brought some degree of prosperity, Montpelier was so situated naturally that extensive material enlargement could hardly be expected.[2] Because of its relative inaccessibility it could never hope to rival Burlington as a commercial centre; but as the home of the state legislature, and as the place of residence of many prominent families, it acquired a distinctive atmosphere of native New England culture and Yankee thrift.

As a matter of fact, the early inhabitants of Montpelier were of an unusually fine stock, from which a large number of eminent men have sprung. Almost as soon as the settlers had established themselves in their new homes, they built churches and schoolhouses; and as early as 1794, only seven years after Colonel Jacob Davis had cleared the ground for a permanent settlement, a library was begun. Its two hundred volumes consisted of histories, biographies, and books of travel and adventure. There was no room on the shelves, however, for fiction or for books of a religious nature, the former being deemed of an immoral tendency, the latter as subversive of social

[1] *History of Montpelier*, p. 134.
[2] T. W. Dwight, *Travels*, ii, 435, 436.

harmony in a new community.[1] As early as 1807 General E. P. Walton had established the Franklin Society, for the avowed purpose of cultivating literary style through the writing of themes. The general himself tried to model his style after that of Benjamin Franklin. In 1814 a new village library was opened, and in 1827 a lyceum was established. Another civilizing influence was the Union House, the favorite tavern of the village, where men gathered to drink rum, talk over the happenings of the day, discuss great political issues, and exchange ideas on subjects of local and general interest. Montpelier, like many another Vermont town, also had its local weekly newspaper; and unlike many another Vermont town, it had its own publishing house. General E. P. Walton, with his son, Eliakah, not only owned and controlled a local newspaper, but also published books, some of which were later reprinted in Boston and Philadelphia. It was E. P. Walton who first published *May Martin* in book form, and also *The Green Mountain Boys*. Among the citizens of local prominence, the Congregational minister, the Reverend Chester Wright, whose church Thompson attended, was distinguished for his interest in literature; and the two men, drawn together by similar tastes, soon became intimate friends. Altogether, the atmosphere of Montpelier was congenial to an unmercenary young lawyer of literary ambition who could quote approvingly, "God made the country and man made the town."[2]

[1] *History of Montpelier*, p. 84. In regard to the policy of excluding fiction from this library Thompson says: "And in regard to the prevailing novels of that day — consisting of the works of Smollett and Fielding, and that still worse class of sickly sentimental love stories and over-strained pictures of life then in vogue — the founders of that library judged wisely, and did well in excluding them."

[2] D. P. Thompson, *Gaut Gurley*, p. 1.

By 1831 Thompson evidently felt that he was well enough established to build a home, for on August 31, he and Miss Eunice Knight Robinson of Troy, Vermont, were married at Hardwick by the Reverend Mr. Chandler. The bride was nineteen years younger than her husband. "I have been told," wrote Daniel Greenleaf Thompson at the time of his mother's death —

> I have been told she was a very beautiful girl, and, if a portrait painted by Mr. Hunter soon after her marriage is any evidence, such was the fact. . . . Their early married life was identified with the house on the hill, with its Ionic columns, and surrounded by trees, which my father built for a home and in which our family was reared. My mother had that comfort which, I think, a young wife always desires, of building a nest. She had the opportunity of planning a house, of beautifying it, of adding treasures to its furnishing from time to time, of planting her favorite shrubbery, and even of setting out a tree for each of her children, or giving them more than one, if she thought they particularly deserved it.[1]

Thompson's literary career may be said to begin with the publication of *May Martin* in 1835. Earlier in the same year, however, in addition to his compilation of the *Laws of Vermont*, there appeared a curious tract bearing an equally curious title: *The Adventures of Timothy Peacock, Esquire, or Freemasonry Practically Illustrated, Comprising a Practical History of Masonry in a Series of amusing Adventures of a Masonic Quixot. By a member of the Vermont Bar.* Published thus anonymously in the height of the anti-Masonic excitement, this satirical novel reflects Thompson's intense dislike of Masonry, a feeling sufficiently widespread at the time to find political expression. In order to understand the state of mind

[1] *The Vermont Watchman*, March, 1894; Daniel G. Thompson to the editor. See Appendix C.

of the Vermonters who belonged to the so-called Anti-Masonic Party in 1834, it may be well briefly to recount the circumstances which gave rise to the most remarkable political organization which has ever attained importance in American history.[1]

This party originated in the murder, in 1826, of one William Morgan of Batavia, New York, who had written a book exposing the secrets of the Masonic order.[2] Morgan was spirited away to Fort Niagara, presumably at the bidding of his official superiors in the order, and what then became of him has never been revealed. The governor of New York, in response to popular indignation, issued a proclamation calling on civil authorities to arrest the offenders and to prevent such outrages in the future.

Excitement spread to all parts of the state, and in the spring of 1827 took on a political form. Morgan meetings were held. The anti-Masonic feeling became general throughout the East, and was particularly strong in Vermont. At Poultney this resolution was adopted: "We will not hear any person preach unless the said preacher should refuse to meet with any lodge of Freemasons, and openly declare that Freemasonry is bad"; at Middlebury a town meeting was called "for the purpose of taking into consideration the late masonic outrages and to make nominations to fill the different offices of this town";[3] and in Montpelier the local lodge of Freemasons was finally dissolved.[4] In the Congressional

[1] J. B. McMaster, *A History of the People of the United States*, v, 109. See also A. B. Hart, *The American Nation: a History*, xv, 192, 193.

[2] *Illustrations of Masonry by One of the Fraternity who has given Thirty Years to the Subject.* An exposition of the first three degrees.

[3] McMaster, *op. cit.*, v, 115.

[4] *Vermont Historical Gazetteer*, iv, 351.

election of 1829, 7000 votes were cast by the Anti-Masons. According to McMaster, "The whole New England belt from Boston to Buffalo fairly teemed with anti-masonic newspapers." In 1830 there were 10,000 Anti-Masons in Vermont, and by 1834 the number had doubled. Thus it is obvious that Thompson's unfavorable opinion of Masonry was not the result of individual caprice, but grew out of a fairly widespread conviction that secret societies should be suppressed.[1]

The specific charges brought against the institution of Masonry were clearly expressed at the national anti-Masonic convention held at Philadelphia in 1830. In substance these charges were: (1) that Masonry was immoral in its tendency, and anti-Christian in its character; (2) that Masonry prevented the administration of justice, set at defiance the laws of the land, tore a peaceable citizen from his family, incarcerated him in a dungeon, and finally, in all probability, executed the penalty of death upon him, for no other cause than that he disclosed the evils and iniquity of the institution; (3) that Masonry rendered the press subservient to its will, and on this point the convention resolved: "That it is a plain principle of politics, that no society of men ought to exist among us which can directly or indirectly abridge the freedom of the press; and when such abridgement does take place there is no remedy for the evil but the appeal to the people, in the exercise of its elective franchise"; (4) that Masons usurped the offices of the nation.

It is not our purpose to discuss these charges, but merely to show that Thompson, in his opposition to Free-

[1] On the other hand, many of those who voted with the Anti Masons did so, not because they were opposed to the Masonic order, or secret societies in general, but because they were dissatisfied with political conditions. The presidential nominee of the Anti-Masons, William Wirt, was himself a Mason.

masonry, was acting on evidence which, whether true or false, was currently accepted by thousands of independent voters throughout New England. One unfortunate result of the controversy in Montpelier was the dismissal in 1830 of the Reverend Chester Wright from the pastorate of the First Congregational Church. Thompson must have felt deeply the injustice done his friend in that hour of excitement; but his version of the affair, written some thirty years after, is just to both parties:

> His dismission . . . grew out of the agitation then going on respecting the merits and demerits of the Masonic Institution, to which many of his people, and quite a number of the leading members of his church, belonged. It was claimed by the friends of that order that Mr. Wright had been found to entertain opinions adverse to the institution, and that he persisted in openly expressing them. On the other side, it was admitted that he might entertain the alleged opinions, and have expressed them in conversation, but never voluntarily introduced them into the pulpit, and therefore had only exercised a common right of every citizen, and of course, had done nothing worthy of censure. The members of the church, who were members of the order, did not take any part in the controversy, but left the battle to those of the order outside the church, and probably said nothing against Mr. Wright worse than to express their regrets that he had destroyed his influence by expressing the obnoxious opinions; even they probably *did* nothing worse than, when the annual subscription paper came round for his support, to put down ciphers against their names instead of their usual dollar marks. In this state of things Mr. Wright very properly called a Council to take cognizance of the subject of his dismission. The Council met, patiently heard the complaints, and by way of decision, in substance said: If Mr. Wright must go, we must dismiss him, but "we find no fault with the man; see ye to it." [1]

[1] *History of Montpelier*, p. 188.

This account of his friend's dismissal is very different in spirit from the pointed satire and bantering ridicule of Masonry shown in *The Adventures of Timothy Peacock*. It is altogether to Thompson's credit that he was never particularly proud of that book. "In his later days," wrote an anonymous biographer, "he felt and averred that some of the Anti-Masonic opinions therein expressed were decidedly unjust to that venerable and beneficent fraternity."[1] It is sufficient to add that the book never became widely known, and disappeared more completely from the public memory than the circumstances that called it forth.

On the other hand, Thompson's first substantial literary performance met with encouraging success. The author himself has given us a brief account of how he came to write *May Martin*, and of its subsequent history.

The tale of *May Martin, or the Money Diggers*, was composed in the evenings of the month of March, 1835, being commenced, and the greater portion of it written, rather as an agreeable relaxation from the professional labors and studies of the day than with any view of publication. At this juncture, however, the offer of a prize of Fifty Dollars for the best original tale, made by the publishers of the *New England Galaxy*, coming under the observation of the author, he hastily finished his story and cast it upon the literary waters, where he supposed, like nine tenths of such ventury, it would be heard of no more. But . . . after many days he found it, by its appearance in the periodical above named, with the award of the prize in question, which it had obtained among numerous competitors. A copyright having been secured, it was then published in book form, a large edition of which was soon exhausted. Since that time, the work has never been published by the author, nor by his consent, nor in consequence of any

[1] *Biogr. Encyc. Vt.*, p. 257.

assignment ever made by him; though the market has been constantly supplied by stolen or unauthorized editions, got up in various parts of the country, and presented without the name of the publishers, and, as might be expected, in a sadly mutilated condition. The publishers of our periodicals, also, have, in numerous instances, given the work to their readers entire, and as with the book publishers, without thanks, return, or benefit to the author, save the compliment involved in the act — which is, indeed, something, since it is not every work that is worth stealing.[1]

Evidently the London publishers of *May Martin* thought the novel worth stealing, for they not only published it without the author's consent, but actually gave it to the world as an English production.[2] In the United States the remarkable popularity of the book is attested by the fifty editions that appeared, most of them pirated, before the Civil War.[3] The inadequacy of the copyright laws deprived Thompson of his legitimate share in the profits of this extensive sale, for after the first edition of 1835 was exhausted, the author was not able "to hold the copyright from rival booksellers, who printed it with impunity, from the unprotected pages of the newspaper." [4] In 1846 a dramatized version by C. H. Saunders was shown on the stage of the Boston Museum.[5] By 1850, however, when the second and revised authorized edition appeared, the public taste had changed somewhat, and the demand for *May Martin* had fallen off to a corresponding degree. But even at the height of its popular success, it appears either to have escaped the

[1] *May Martin*, Introduction to the revised edition of 1850, pp. 9, 10.

[2] See J. Clements's edition, in The Romanticists' and Novelists' Library, London, 1841.

[3] See Bibliography, p. 321.

[4] Duyckinck, *Cyclopedia*, p. 945.

[5] A. H. Quinn, *History of the American Theatre*, p. 442.

notice of critics and book reviewers, or to have been considered by them as of not sufficient literary importance to merit a review.[1]

Of the years between the publication of *May Martin* and *The Green Mountain Boys* there is little record. In 1837 Thompson was appointed Judge of Probate for Washington County. This position he held until 1840. Henceforth he was known as Judge Thompson, not only to neighbors and friends, but to all who read his books. In 1838 he was named by the General Assembly, in an act approved November 5, as one of the four incorporators of the Vermont Historical and Antiquarian Society, the avowed purpose of which was to collect and preserve materials for the civil and natural history of Vermont. At the first meeting of this society Judge Thompson was made secretary, and in this position he continued intermittently for a period of years. He remained an active member to the time of his death.

Montpelier at this time supplied an ideal environment for a man of Judge Thompson's particular interests. Its very remoteness from the larger centres of population constituted no small part of its charm. Everyone who lived in the village had been born there, knew all his neighbors, attended the Congregational Church, went hunting or fishing in season, found social diversion at the Union House or in some coterie of congenial friends, and read much during the long winters. There was, too, an atmosphere of democracy induced by a common life of industry and thrift, and the absence of a wealthy leisure class. Many of the old habits and customs still persisted, and a sufficient number of the early settlers still

[1] Neither the *North American Review* nor any other prominent magazine of the period contains a review of *May Martin*.

lingered, to give this New England village a sense of its own past. Indeed, as late as 1840 there were still a few aged men who, like Luther King and Eliakim Persons, had fought in the Revolution.[1] The reminiscences of those pioneers opened a rich vein of material for the local historian to draw upon. Historic incidents could be further illuminated by a first-hand study of the local setting in which they had occurred. Crown Point and Ticonderoga, Hubbardton and Bennington — to mention only the principal scenes of the early Revolutionary history of Vermont — were all within easy travelling distance of Montpelier. Then, too, many natural attractions, accentuated as they were by associations of childhood, were bound to exert a fascinating influence on anyone who like Thompson loved the country. The invigorating climate, the impressive mountain scenery, the companionable Winooski River flowing through the village, and the familiar trout-streams in the neighborhood, induced in him the tranquillity and the zest for life that he could never have felt in a crowded city.[2]

Amid these pleasant surroundings Thompson had established his permanent home, and the house on Barre

[1] See *Vermont Historical Gazetteer*, iv, 341, for a list of the "Revolutionary soldiers, who lived and died in Montpelier."

[2] That Thompson preferred the country to the city is evident from nearly all his writings. The following passage from *Gaut Gurley* (p. 1) is typical.

"'God made the country and man made the town.'

"So wrote the charming Cowper, giving us to understand, by the drift of the context, that he intended the remark as having a moral as well as a physical application; since, as he there intimates, in 'gain devoted cities' whither naturally flow 'the dregs and feculence of every land,' and where 'foul example in most minds begets its likeness,' the vices will ever find their favorite haunts; while the virtues, on the contrary, will always most abound in the country."

The author's antipathy to cities and his naive distrust of an increasingly materialistic civilization will be discussed in a later chapter.

Street soon became a centre of interest in the delightful social life of Montpelier. His wife, who was a "society woman in the old New England sense," believed in "neighborly kindness, in the companionship of the sewing circle, the church, the benevolent society." [1] She is further described by her youngest son as cheerful, lively, conversational. He adds:

> She never learned, perhaps, that silence and seclusion after all may be the best comforters, but sympathizing with others, she craved sympathy for herself, and could not imagine why what was hers should not be common knowledge. Her ideas were that woman should be both domestic and social, and, according to her lights, she did not fail to do her duty nor to contribute to make life happier for all within the sphere of her influence. She was a believer in the gospel of work. Idleness was to her a sin.

The further statement that she was "thrifty and careful as a housewife, a true helpmeet to her husband," gives us a pleasing picture of the woman, and an impression of domestic tranquillity. Aside from the letter just quoted, no account of the home life of the Thompsons can be found, except, perhaps, a few vague reminiscences handed down by oral tradition. It is a matter of record, however, that their eldest son, George Robinson, was born on January 1, 1834, and that three years later Alma, the first of two daughters, came into the world.

Thompson would have been different from most authors if the unexpected success of *May Martin* had not incited him to renewed effort. But as yet he was not sure in his own mind whether this success was the result of a lucky hit or was due to the display of actual power. Even after the publication of *The Green Mountain Boys*

[1] Letter of Daniel G. Thompson. See Appendix C.

he wrote to Longfellow for advice on this perplexing question. In his reply Longfellow assured Thompson that the very impulse from within, urging him to write after the labor of the day, — the restlessness to be doing, — was an evidence of power. "Choose wisely how to direct it," he added.[1]

But Thompson had already chosen wisely when he set about the task that lay nearest his heart. This was to embody in a romantic fiction some of the most interesting scenes and incidents of the Revolutionary history of Vermont. Having previously collected material which otherwise would have been irrevocably lost, he now spent his leisure hours in moulding it into permanent form. If local tradition is to be credited, Thompson wrote a good part of *The Green Mountain Boys* while sitting under a pine tree on his father's farm in Berlin. Perhaps the novelist, now a man of forty-three, returned to the scene of his early boyhood to rekindle the spirit of youth.

At any rate, *The Green Mountain Boys* appeared in 1839, from the press of E. P. Walton and Son of Montpelier.[2] The first edition was printed in two volumes. The following year the book was published in London, and later in Leipzig. American editions appeared in Boston, New York, Chicago, and other places. Its popularity was much greater than that of *May Martin*. It far surpassed the earlier book in the interest of its subject, and was enough superior in its descriptive and

[1] The original of this letter is in the possession of Mr. Harold Rugg, Assistant Librarian of Dartmouth College. It was presented to Mr. Rugg by a Mr. Swain, who was a printer and editor in Bellows Falls, Vt. Through the courtesy of Mr. Rugg, the writer obtained a copy of the letter.

[2] In an unsigned review of *Centeola*, in the *Green Mountain Freeman* for January 10, 1865, the statement is made that *The Green Mountain Boys* first appeared in the *Watchman*.

narrative qualities to gain a much wider reading both at home and abroad. Indeed, Judge Thompson lived long enough to see *The Green Mountain Boys* become the classic of Vermont.

There is now a gap of nearly a decade in our biographical records of Thompson. We know only that during this period he was apparently too much engrossed in the practice of law and in the duties of public office to produce literature in any quantity. In 1843 he was appointed clerk of the county court and of the Supreme Court, and these positions he held until 1845. The very prominence which he had now attained probably made it more difficult for him to obtain the necessary leisure for writing. What with his increased legal practice, official duties, lectures, church work, and social obligations, he doubtless found his time fully occupied. Law, not literature, was his profession. To him writing was necessarily a hobby, as reading was a recreation, to be taken up in the evening after a full day's work in court. Moreover, he did not find literature especially profitable. *May Martin* had been pirated, and *The Green Mountain Boys*, like his subsequent books, was published in cheap editions, from the sale of which the royalty must have been small.

Of Thompson's reading we can speak with more certainty. Scott alone, of the newer poets, appears to have exerted any considerable influence on him. In *Locke Amsden* (1847) Thompson refers to Pope as his favorite poet; and if frequency of quotation be any criterion, he liked also Dryden, Thomson, Young, Gay, and Cowper, and preferred Goldsmith to Crabbe. Wordsworth and Coleridge were not unknown to him, but his literary tastes, formed as they were in impressionable years

on the conventional models of the eighteenth century, were pretty definitely fixed before the influence of the romantic poets was felt in the provincial community in which he moved. Again, if frequency of quotation be significant, the Bible was his favorite book, and after that, *Pilgrim's Progress*. He knew his Shakespeare, but apparently no other dramatist. Fiction he read less than poetry, but he was acquainted with Fielding and Smollett, and, as we are aware, he knew Scott and Cooper well enough to imitate them. It is useful to notice these facts, if for no other reason than the very great importance which Thompson himself attached to the influence of reading on his own self-development.

Education is the subject of our author's next literary experiment. *Locke Amsden, or the Schoolmaster*, which appeared in 1847, is dedicated to the "friends of popular education and self-intellectual culture in the United States." As secretary of the State Education Society, Thompson had in the current year again come into contact with the common schools.[1] This experience must have freshened his interest in education and may have prompted him to try the experiment of writing a new kind of novel, the main purpose of which was to suggest improvements in the American school system. In this field Thompson was a pioneer. How well he succeeded is shown by the approval that *Locke Amsden* received from prominent educators such as Horace Mann, Jared Sparks, Longfellow, and Felton. The book is interesting also because it is largely autobiographical: Locke Ams-

[1] In the *Daily Journal* of October 19, 1846, there is a notice of a meeting of the Vermont State Education Society, D. P. Thompson, secretary, on October 15, Thursday, at the Free Church in Montpelier. At this meeting (according to the account) a resolution was made approving a law enacted at the last session of the legislature for the improvement of the common schools.

den is Daniel P. Thompson. The author relates the story of his own bitter struggle to obtain an education, and of his experiences as a teacher in the district schools of northern Vermont. In many respects this is his best book.

During the year that Thompson was secretary of the State Education Society he may also have written his lecture on "Results to be aimed at in Instruction and Discipline." The original manuscript is undated, but it is clearly addressed to teachers. Its thesis is the two-fold object of education: namely, to impart knowledge and to strengthen the mind. The lecturer stresses the importance of making the pupil understand each step in the process of learning, and of making him master thoroughly one thing at a time. He also insists that memory should not be made an end in itself. In view of Thompson's own varied professional experience, the conclusion is worth quoting.

> And once more, and lastly, do not under-rate the importance of your calling, nor the honor that truly belongs to it, but, to encourage and console yourselves, in your exertions and trials, put a proper estimate on the value of your services to the public, and that estimate, remember, to be a proper one, will indeed be a high one: For here, in the honesty of my convictions, I hazard the assertion that the welfare of society, and the continuance of our free institutions, are more dependent on the action of your calling than that of either, or all, the learned professions, and that your station is more useful, more responsible, and should be more truly honorable than the coveted place of those who yearly assemble to make laws and speeches at yonder granite Capitol, or we may add, those higher Halls of national legislation, which is deemed the very ultima Thule of honorable distinction.[1]

[1] Quoted from the original manuscript in the possession of Mr. Charles M. Thompson.

Another lecture, "The Importance of Training the Imagination," is also concerned with education, aiming to show the need of cultivating the imagination as an aid to better living. Thompson's thought is never deep, but it is at least psychologically sound, and reflects the working of an independent, well-balanced mind.

Although literary friends and acquaintances were apparently never numerous, our author numbered among them some of the most influential men of New England. Jared Sparks, who in 1849 became president of Harvard College, is said to have been an intimate friend.[1] At any rate, Thompson dedicated his next book to Sparks, and he is known to have corresponded with him.[2] He apparently knew John G. Saxe somewhat intimately, and from 1846 was a fellow townsman of Charles G. Eastman, who in that year moved to Montpelier to become proprietor and editor of the *Vermont Patriot*. Among his familiar acquaintances or guests were a few prominent statesmen and publicists, for active participation in the anti-slavery movement probably brought him into contact with Henry Wilson, Charles Sumner, and other conspicuous leaders.[3] His connection with this important political movement reveals still another phase of a many-sided career.

In politics Judge Thompson was originally a Democrat, a believer in Jeffersonian democracy; but later he supported the Liberty Party; and finally, when that

[1] *Biog. Encyc. Vt.*, p. 257. From the paucity of references to Thompson in the Sparks papers at Harvard, however, one is inclined to think that the relations between Sparks and Thompson were never intimate. See also Sparks's letter, Appendix B.

[2] Sparks to Thompson, May 17, 1852. No letters from Thompson to Sparks have been found, however, either in the Sparks collection in the Boston Public Library or in that of Harvard Library.

[3] *Biog. Encyc. Vt.*, p. 257. Doubtful authority.

organization dissolved, he drifted into the ranks of the Republicans. The explanation for this shifting from one party to another may be found in the growth of the anti-slavery movement.

Vermont had been opposed to slavery since the adoption of its constitution, in 1777,[1] which prohibited the holding of slaves. To what extent this opposition was determined by economic conditions, rather than humanitarian motives, is a matter of speculation which does not concern us. But it is relevant to our purpose to note the following simple facts: in 1820 the representatives of Vermont in Congress opposed the admission of Missouri as a slave state; in 1825 the General Assembly passed resolutions declaring that it would support any measures adopted by the Federal government for the abolition of slavery in the United States "that are consistent with the rights of the people and the general harmony of the States";[2] and in 1833 Colonel Jonathan P. Miller, representative from Berlin, introduced a resolution in the legislature that the senators and representatives from Vermont in Congress be directed "to use their endeavors to effect the abolition of slavery and the slave trade in the district of Columbia."[3]

This resolution, though defeated at the next session, is important because it marks the beginning of the anti-slavery movement in the legislature of Vermont. In the presidential election of 1840 the first anti-slavery votes (319) were cast in Vermont, for James G. Birney. In 1841 the Liberty Party was organized, largely through

[1] See *Governor and Council*, i, 92; "The Vermont Constitution and Slavery," by J. H. Watson, Justice of the Supreme Court of Vermont; and *Vermont Historical Society Proceedings* (1919–1920), p. 227.

[2] *Ibid.*; also, Robinson, *Vermont*, p. 336.

[3] *Vermont Historical Gazetteer*, iv, 461.

the efforts of Colonel Miller and his friends, and its candidate for governor attracted enough votes from the Whigs and Democrats to prevent an election by the people. In 1844 the *Green Mountain Freeman*, a weekly paper, was established as the organ of the Liberty Party.[1] Six years later it came under the control of Judge Thompson, who remained its sole proprietor and editor until 1856. At this time the newly organized Republican Party made opposition to the extension of slavery its chief issue in the presidential campaign. Then, as in 1849 (or earlier), Thompson aligned himself with the Anti-Slavery Party.

After all, this is precisely what one would expect of a consistent believer in the old Jeffersonian theory of democracy. To Thompson, party labels meant nothing. The fundamental principle for which he contended was merely an honest application of the idea of equality as expressed by Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence. "We hold this truth to be self-evident that all men are created equal" appeared weekly under the title of the *Green Mountain Freeman* during the entire period of Thompson's editorship. Whether he would have shared the sentiment later expressed by the founder of the *Freeman*, Jacob Scott, that he "looks back upon his five years' labors in this connection as the crowning glory of his life,"[2] is not certain, but he could contemplate with just pride a record of disinterested service in the cause of freedom. It is interesting to

[1] The *Green Mountain Freeman* succeeded the *Voice of Freedom*, an anti-slavery newspaper which was established in 1839 by Allen and Poland, with C. L. Knapp as editor. In his *History of Montpelier* Thompson gives 1843 as the date of the establishment of the *Freeman*.

[2] *Vermont Historical Gazetteer*, iv, 312.

note in this connection that the "Talk with Jefferson" appeared soon after Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.

During the seven years that Thompson was editor of the *Freeman* many important events occurred in the history of the nation. Among them was the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, and the ensuing struggle for the possession of Kansas. In 1852 Franklin Pierce had been elected President by the Democrats over General Scott, the Whig candidate. Before the next presidential election the Whig Party had virtually ceased to exist. Upon its dissolution Vermont at once joined the ranks of the newly organized Republican Party. Meanwhile, the action of President Pierce in removing Governor Reeder of Kansas had aroused widespread indignation in New England, especially in Vermont. Accordingly, when the Republicans of Washington County met on August 11, 1855, at the court-house in Montpelier, and effected an organization, of which George W. Bailey was elected president and Daniel P. Thompson one of the secretaries, resolutions were passed condemning the Pierce administration as pro-slavery, and cordially approving the platform on slavery put forth by the American Party in its state convention at Burlington in June.[1] Judge Thompson was a member of the resolutions committee.

In an editorial that appeared five days later in the *Freeman*, Thompson further expressed his view of the situation in Kansas, urging drastic action by the "Free-state men." This article is worth quoting, at least in part.

[1] *Green Mountain Freeman*, August 16, 1855.

The Battle Ground of Freedom.

The indications are every day thickening that Kansas is destined to become the next chief battle-ground between the forces of Freedom and the minions of the Slave Power — that there must be the fierce and perhaps final struggle — and that there must be decided whether our Declaration of Independence is hereafter to be a living or a dead letter to the American people. The freemen of the North do not yet seem to realize the alarming state of affairs there. They do not keep up with the rapid march of the Slave Power; and the danger is that the battle, at this all important point, will be lost forever, before this apathy in the Free States shall be shaken off, and there shall be such an uprising as shall be adequate to meet the momentous exigency. . . . We believe there will be soon a serious attempt made, to expel by force from Kansas, every Free Soiler it contains and that, unless the people there have help, the attempt will be successful. The attempt, indeed, seems already to have commenced. . . .

After quoting from the Kansas *Herald of Freedom* to show that attempts were then being made by pro-slavery men to drive off "Free State" voters, the editor continues:

Now what is this but a state of open war in Kansas? . . . What is to be done? Our advice would be to take bold, prompt, and decided action — to rally every able-bodied Free State man in the territory; and, after fair warning, attack the invaders as they would any other enemy in time of war, shoot down, make prisoners and drive them from the territory. Then send an alarm through Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin for volunteers to help defend their standard of freedom, prepare for a second onset, and trust in God for the result. This may seem bold preaching, but when the highest officials of a Federal Government, formed to protect the people in their rights, league themselves with armed ruffians, as they are virtually doing in the present case, is it not time to do something besides talking?[1]

[1] *Green Mountain Freeman*, August 16, 1855.

Through the pages of the *Freeman* Thompson continued his anti-slavery campaign for still another year. But by that time the combined labor of editing and publishing a weekly paper, in addition to the demands of public office, legal practice, and literary work, proved to be too much even for a man of his rugged constitution. Moreover, he was now sixty-one years old. He had indeed, while editor of the *Freeman*, published *The Rangers* (1851), served two years as Secretary of State (1853–1855), practised his profession, somewhat indifferently to be sure, delivered lyceum lectures,[1] and carried on historical investigations. The strain of overwork, perhaps also of financial worry, brought on illness; and accordingly, in 1856, he sold his paper to S. S. Boyce.[2]

If the actual business of writing editorials and preparing news had been for Thompson a labor of love, the practical duties of publishing and printing had undoubtedly been a burden. Indeed, from a letter which he wrote in 1851 to one A. N. Swain, a prospective publisher, it appears that he needed not only the practical assistance of a foreman, which he later had, but also the financial aid of a partner, which he failed to obtain. At any rate, he offered Swain a half-interest in the *Freeman* for the exact sum he had paid Jacob Scott in 1849. Part of this letter follows.

I have been told that you think of setting up business by publishing a county paper in Winsor Co. if you get a certain amount of encouragement. Would you not do better by join-

[1] *Vermont Watchman and State Examiner*, February 17, 1854, contains the following notice: "Montpelier Literary Institute. The 8th. lecture before the Montpelier Literary Institute, will be given on Friday evening at Washington Hall, by the Hon. D. P. Thompson. Subject: Discipline of the Imagination. Lecture to commence at seven o'clock precisely."

[2] *Vermont Historical Gazetteer*, iv, 312; and *History of Montpelier*, p. 103.

ing me in the Freeman. I believe you are a practical printer & I am in search of such a partner — I will sell out half my paper for the sake of such a partner for $1600 (just what it cost me) tho' far below its value as such establishments are held here. I have had many offers from those not printers but refused. I can have as much advertising as I want & job work for which I am now quite well provided. I should want my pay, however, part soon and all within a year. I feel sure we could make money. Think of this and write.[1]

Swain did not accept this offer, but on February 5, 1852, Joseph W. Wheelock came to Montpelier and took over the duties of foreman, not partner, in the office of the *Freeman*.[2] Four years later, as we noted above, Thompson sold the paper to Boyce and retired from journalism.

Meanwhile, our author's reputation, if it had not spread far and wide, had at least penetrated beyond the state of Vermont. Curiously enough, *Locke Amsden*, though far less popular than *The Green Mountain Boys*, was the first of his novels to elicit comment from the hitherto silent, if not scornful, book reviewers. Their interest in its novelty actually predisposed them to overlook its literary imperfections; but they were, in fact, justified in considering it a better book than any of its predecessors. *Locke Amsden* received favorable notice from the *North American Review* and the New York *Tribune*, and as a result his next book was welcomed by other periodicals and newspapers. About this time the Duyckinck brothers were preparing their *Cyclopedia of American Literature*, which was to appear in 1855. In this encyclopedia they wished to include a biographical

[1] This unpublished letter was given by Mr. Swain, a printer and editor in Bellows Falls, Vt., to Mr. Harold Rugg, Assistant Librarian of Dartmouth College. I obtained a copy from Mr. Rugg.

[2] *Vermont Historical Gazetteer*, iv, 312.

sketch of Thompson; and accordingly Charles Scribner, the publisher, wrote to Montpelier for Thompson's memoir. To the publisher's circular our author replied as follows.

CHS. SCRIBNER ESQ.[1]

D Sir — In compliance with the request contained in your circular just received, I send you a memoir of myself which I prepared for a publisher about a year ago, but the work for which it was prepared being relinquished the sketch was left on hand. It is closely confined to facts and will contain all you want, and probably more than you will have space for. But I am perfectly willing to trust Mr. Duyckinck to abbreviate it, only I wish you would preserve the copy and return it to me when you have done with it.

Mr. Duyckinck should have all my works before him in 4 uniform vols. . . . for the purpose of extracts and making a critical estimate of them. . . .

I should like two or three copies of your work when published for my family.

Yours truly,

D. P. THOMPSON.

Montpelier Aug. 14 '54.

On the left-hand margin of the letter appears this postscript: "I could send my daguerotyp but suppose you would not go to the expense of engraving it."

The following letter, though undated, was evidently written soon after the one just quoted.

MR. SCRIBNER.

I send herewith my daguerrotyp with my usual signature enclosed as Mr. Duyckinck in a recent note to me requested. The likeness is pronounced by my friends here a strong and good one.

[1] These letters are copied from the original letters in the Duyckinck Collection of the New York Public Library. They have never been published.

I have written to Mussey & Co to furnish you a full set of my works for the use of the editors of your work.

You have a good plan and the best of editors and I think your enterprise must succeed. I will do what I can for it in Vt.

Yours

D P Thompson.

When, in 1856, the novelist's eldest son George went to New York City to enter a law office, he carried with him a letter of introduction from his father addressed to Mr. George Duyckinck. In this note further reference is made to the *Cyclopedia*, copies of which Thompson had evidently received.

Geo. Duyckinck,

D Sir — The bearer is my son, Geo. R. Thompson, who having completed his classical and legal education in Vermont, has been induced to enter a law office in your city, with a view of ultimately becoming a professional resident. As his, and your literary tastes will be similar, I introduce him, that he may, if found agreeable all round, have access to some of the literary circles of New York. If the manuscript which I sent you, and from which you drew your very hansome notice of me in the Lit. Cyclopedia, is at hand, you may give it to him.

You have come out nobly triumphant in your work, which, or I am no guesser, will soon throw aught else of the kind a dozen miles into the shade.

Yours truly,

D P Thompson.

It is interesting to note that a younger son, Daniel Greenleaf Thompson, now six years old, was also to follow his father's example by becoming a lawyer. Both George [1] and Daniel later achieved prominence at the

[1] George R. Thompson was fitted for college at the Washington County Grammar School, entered the University of Vermont in 1849, was graduated

New York Bar; the latter, however, like his father, became far better known as an author than as a lawyer.[1] But where the father took to fiction as a relaxation, the son found his relief in philosophy. At the time of his death in 1897 Daniel Greenleaf Thompson had an international reputation as a student of psychology and of social problems.

On October 24, 1850, Judge Thompson had delivered an address on the Vermont Council of Safety in the Representatives' Hall, Montpelier, before the Historical Society in the presence of both houses of the General Assembly. Two thousand copies of this "interesting and

in 1853, studied law in Montpelier, was for two years Clerk of the House of Representatives (State), and moved to New York City in 1856 to practise his profession. He became prominent. His career was cut short, however, by a fatal accident. On the night of February 6, 1871, on his way to Albany, to argue a case before the Court of Appeals, he was instantaneously killed by a disaster to the train at New Hamburgh, N. Y. He is survived by a son, Charles Miner Thompson, formerly editor of *The Youth's Companion*, and now connected with the Harvard University Press.

[1] Daniel Greenleaf Thompson was born February 9, 1850. He was prepared for college in the Washington County Grammar School, graduated with honors at Amherst College in 1869, and in that year removed to New York City, where he studied law with his brother, George R. Thompson. From 1870 to 1872 he was a teacher of Latin in the Springfield, Mass., high school. In 1872 he was admitted to the Bar in New York City, and from then on he was in active practice. For nearly four years he was a member of the firm of Jordan, Stiles, and Thompson. After this he formed a co-partnership with Simon Sterne and Oscar Straus (formerly United States Minister to Turkey), under the firm name of Sterne, Straus, and Thompson. Later he formed a partnership with John A. Taylor, formerly Corporation Counsel of Brooklyn, under the firm name of Taylor and Thompson, with an office at 111 Broadway. Throughout his legal career he was engaged in systematic literary work. Among other books he wrote: *A System of Psychology*, in 2 vols. (1884); *The Problem of Evil* (1886); *Social Progress* (1889); and *The Philosophy of Fiction in Literature* (1892). In 1894 Amherst College conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. He died on July 10, 1897.

According to Brander Matthews (*Daniel Greenleaf Thompson . . . Memorial Volume*, pp. 71, 72), Daniel G. Thompson did not think very highly of *The Green Mountain Boys*. "I have the impression that the son did not greatly care for this lively yarn of his father's, and perhaps he may even have underestimated the value of this unpretending historical novel. . . ."

valuable Address," as it was described in a resolution of the Assembly, were printed by order of the legislature. Within a year it appeared in a slightly modified form, as its author had planned, incorporated in *The Rangers* as chapter 1 of volume II.[1] But apparently not everyone considered it a valuable piece of historical research. In fact, E. P. Walton, a fellow townsman of Thompson and the publisher of some of his novels, later declared this pamphlet to be historically inaccurate. In his *Governor and Council*[2] he wrote:

> D. P. Thompson's historical statements are to be taken with great allowances for error. His habit for years was to build superstructures of fiction upon a very narrow basis of fact, having the air but not the accuracy of history. His address was eminently of that character.

In considering this charge of historical inaccuracy we must distinguish between Thompson, the historian, and Thompson, the novelist. Admittedly, an address delivered before an historical society should be accurate in every detail. The specific points[3] raised by Walton, however trivial in themselves, are nevertheless sufficiently important to make the address an untrustworthy source of information for the exacting student of history.

[1] See also the "Life Character and Times of Ira Allen," which originally appeared in the *Vermont Record* between August and December, 1864, and was reprinted in the *Vermont Historical Society Proceedings*, 1908.

[2] Vol. i, p. 72.

[3] *Governor and Council*, i, 135: "D. P. Thompson, in his address before the Vt. Hist. Soc. in 1850, gave a very spirited sketch of a debate in the Council on the defection of Benjamin Spencer and the vital question of military supplies, purporting, that it occurred on the day Paul Spooner wrote to Gen. Bayley of Spencer's conduct; but, alas! it was all fiction. Ira Allen fixed the decision of the supply question [confiscation] *before* the adjournment of the Council of Safety to Bennington — of course between the 11th. and the 15th. of July, on which day Herrick was commissioned Colonel as the first result of Allen's policy — while Spooner's letter to Bayley was dated on the 11th. of August following. The truth of history forces this unwelcome marring of Mr. Thompson's pretty picture."

To that extent, then, Walton's statement is damaging to Thompson's reputation as an historian. But his assertion that the novelist built "superstructures of fiction upon a very narrow basis of fact," aside from its being exaggerated, is of slight consequence. In each of his novels Thompson had an adequate basis of fact for the end in view. After all, historical fiction is not history, and if it is to be popular, fiction and not fact must be emphasized. We shall discuss this question more fully in a later chapter.

To most readers it will not be surprising to learn that our author — like many prose writers — dabbled in verse. It will be remembered that he is said to have written poetry in his youth. Recently a short poem written in 1853 has come to light; and also an undated plan of a poem in eight cantos "to be entitled The Peruvian or [a] Misanthrope Reclaimed." Since the latter is only a hazy sketch, we are inclined to leave it without comment. The former, however, is worth quoting as perhaps the only poem of Thompson's in existence.[1]

THE HOUR OF WAKING.

At this calm hour, the dreams of night
Fade quickly from the mental sight;
And all those shadowy forms of things,
Rais'd in our wild imaginings,
With charm dissolving, seem to fly
The eager grasp of memory;
And fading on the pensive mind
A gloomy impress leave behind
Which whispers, *thus now what we seem —*
Ev'n Life itself is but a dream.

[1] The manuscript of this unpublished poem is in the possession of Mr. Charles M. Thompson. It is dated July, 1853, and is signed "D. P. Thompson, author of Locke Amsden."

In looking over the pages of the *Green Mountain Freeman* one finds occasional bits of verse, but apparently none by the editor. Perhaps, during this busy period, he scribbled couplets merely for mental relaxation.

When Judge Thompson relinquished control of the *Freeman*, he apparently wished to withdraw from public life. For almost the first time in thirty years he was now a private citizen free to devote himself entirely to his much neglected profession and his fascinating hobby. A many-sided career, embracing, as we have seen, teaching, law, politics, journalism, antiquarian research, and literature, now narrowed down to the practice of law and the occasional writing of historical tales. In 1857 our author published *Gaut Gurley, or the Trappers of Umbagog*, a tale of border life. The scene is laid in the vicinity of Lake Umbagog (one of the Rangeley Lakes) near the border line between New Hampshire and Maine, slightly more than forty miles south of the province of Quebec and a little more than forty miles north of the famous Lovell's Pond. It is interesting to note, in this connection, that Fryeburg (near Lovell's Pond) was the birthplace of the poet, Charles G. Eastman, then editor of the local democratic *Vermont Patriot*, and a personal friend of Thompson's. As our author greatly admired Eastman's verse, particularly his *A Snow-Storm in Vermont* (from which he quoted in *Gaut Gurley*, page 211), it is not impossible that the two literary friends may have talked over the story together. This, however, is pure speculation. Eastman died in 1860, the same year, incidentally, in which Thompson published *The Doomed Chief*, a tale of King Philip's War.

Among the older residents of Montpelier there were doubtless not a few who remembered the town as it ap-

peared in the early days, but nevertheless it was voted by the town council that Judge Thompson should be the official historian of the town. This resolution was passed in March, 1859. It was at once a fitting tribute to the most prominent citizen of Montpelier and a recognition of his peculiar fitness for such a task. Our author now had recourse to the invaluable unpublished material which he had collected in 1824, when he prepared his brief article on Montpelier for Zadock Thompson's *Gazetteer*.

> But feeling that we had only entered the field to be explored, we begun our investigations anew. And besides examining all the written and published evidence to be found, which had any reference to the subject at hand, we at once commenced a series of personal visits to all the still remaining survivors of the first settlement in Montpelier and the neighboring towns, that we might take down from their own lips that oral testimony of general facts, particular incidents, personal descriptions and the current opinions and notions of the men and times of which they spoke, and which could alone enable us to give a true and just picture of those men and times.[1]

If any criticism can be made of Thompson's method at all, it is that he was not sufficiently critical in evaluating his sources, that he accepted as true, statements that were not supported by any evidence except the testimony of the person making them.[2] It is only fair to add, however, that as he explains in the preface to his *History*) he was careful to consult the most trustworthy persons he could find.

And so in the course of a year the *History of the Town of Montpelier*, from 1781 to 1860, with biographical sketches of its most noted deceased citizens, appeared

[1] See *History of Montpelier*, preface, p. v.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. iv, v.

from the press of E. P. Walton. This history is apparently not modelled after any other town history then in existence. It is written in the homely, familiar style of a reminiscent citizen who has drawn as largely as possible from personal recollection. It is divided into two parts: first, a somewhat rambling chronological story of the development of the town, which, despite its literary imperfections, possesses all the charm of personality; and second, a series of brief biographical sketches of the men and women most prominently identified with the history of the place. And in reading this history, particularly the sketches of such men as Colonel Jacob Davis, General E. P. Walton, Reverend Chester Wright, Senator Prentiss, Dr. Spalding, and others of less prominence, one learns something about the character of Judge Thompson himself. Of actual autobiographical fact, however, one might have learned more from a less modest man. But in emphasizing the importance of religion in a frontier community, in estimating citizenship by its contribution to social welfare rather than to self-aggrandizement, in deprecating vice, in regretting the unprecedented advance of materialism, and in a number of other respects, he reveals something of his own fine nature. In short, he epitomizes his whole career in his insistence that a good name is rather to be preferred than great riches.

Montpelier in 1860 was still a companionable village, for its population had increased but slightly even after the advent, in 1849, of the Central Vermont Railroad. Like other New England towns, it was already losing many of its younger men, who were being drawn to the Middle West by the lure of greater economic opportunity. The fertile lands of Ohio attracted many, while

others emigrated to Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa. The great cities of the East also drew some of the most promising young men from Montpelier. We are reminded that the famous artist, Thomas Waterman Wood, was born in this village, as were Admiral George Dewey, and, of course, George R. Thompson and Daniel Greenleaf Thompson; and that, with the exception of Dewey, these notable men practised their professions in New York City. But the main tide of emigration seems to have been westward. Shortly before 1860 Alma Thompson, the judge's eldest daughter, had married a Westerner, the Honorable George P. Burrows, and had moved with him to his home in Madison, Wisconsin. William Thompson, the novelist's second son, who was a saddler, followed somewhat later. It was to visit Mrs. Burrows that Judge Thompson made a trip to Wisconsin in the winter of 1863–1864. He remained there until spring.[1] With the exception of his early sojourn in Virginia, this was possibly his longest absence from Vermont. In *The Shaker Lovers* he mentions a journey on horseback to a Shaker community in New Hampshire; from *Gaut Gurley* it appears that he must have spent some time in Maine, and in *Locke Amsden* he speaks of "considerable travel and intercourse among the common classes of people in the Middle and Northern States," a rather vague statement which should be taken with caution because of its source. In 1848 he had met Lydia H. Sigourney — possibly at Hartford. Doubtless, too, he went to Boston occasionally to visit his publishers and perhaps General Abijah Thompson of Woburn, a distant relative, with whom he is said to

[1] See letter to D. L. Milliken on p. 72.

have been on terms of intimate friendship.[1] But on the whole he was too well contented in his native hills to remain long or far from home, even had his means permitted it.

While spending some months in Wisconsin, Thompson became interested in the traces of ancient Indian mounds which he found in the valley of the Wisconsin River. These mounds he regarded as relics of the Azatlan race, who had lived, or at least were supposed by him to have lived, in that territory more than seven centuries ago. Starting with this theory he wrote an entirely imaginative story, the scene of which he laid in the lower portions of the Wisconsin valley. It is possible that the actual composition of *Centeola; or the Maid of the Mounds* was done after his return to Montpelier, but the idea of writing the book, the preparation of its material, was the immediate result of his investigations in Wisconsin.[2] Incidentally, *Centeola* (1864) was our author's last published book.

In the same volume with *Centeola* were several short stories which were based upon incidents of purely local interest. Among these sketches was one entitled *The Unfathomable Mystery*. As this story was concerned with the Berlin Pond murder, or probable murder, of several years before, and as everyone in Montpelier knew its implications, the two local residents whom suspicion had connected with this crime bought all the procurable copies of *Centeola* and destroyed them. Briefly, the circumstances were as follows.[3] A German

[1] *Memorial of James Thompson*, p. 136.

[2] See the preface of *Centeola*, and the review of this book which appeared in the *Green Mountain Freeman* for January 10, 1865.

[3] The account given above is based on oral tradition and was related to me by several residents of Montpelier. For obvious reasons the names of the men suspected of the murder are withheld.

peddler had come through Montpelier selling his wares, and he had carried with him large sums of money. Suddenly he disappeared. He was last seen in Berlin near the pond. There seems to have been no doubt that he was murdered, for, though his body was never recovered, some of his effects were found at a spot where, it was obvious, a human body had been dragged into the water. Soon after this peddler's disappearance, a local jeweler and a friend of his suddenly blossomed forth in great prosperity. Justly or unjustly these two men were immediately thought to be responsible for the mysterious disappearance of the peddler — they were, indeed, suspected of having murdered him. They were never brought to trial, however, for the evidence against them was not conclusive. In a review of *Centeola* which appeared in the *Freeman* on January 10, 1865, *The Unfathomable Mystery* is referred to as "the only history extant of the incidents and evidence which led to the belief in the 'Berlin murder.'" As both of the suspected men have long since died, the whole matter is well forgotten; only the dubious versions handed down by local tradition now linger for occasional speculation. It is interesting to us only in connection with Thompson's story, to which the reader is referred for whatever information he desires about an unsolved mystery.

A month or two after his return from the West, Judge Thompson wrote the following letter[1] to a Mr. D. L. Milliken of the *Vermont Record*, in answer to a request for an article for publication.

[1] The original of this unpublished letter is in the possession of Mr. Charles M. Thompson.

Montpelier, June 6, '64.

D. L. Milliken

Dr Sir: Yours in relation to writing for the Record came to Montpelier very soon after my return from the West where I passed the winter and I have been so busy I have not found time till now to reply.

Perhaps I could write for your journal but would prefer historical subjects connected with the early times & men of Vermont. Others could do better on the part the State has taken in this Rebellion. Articles of this kind must necessarily consist so much of statistics that I do not think I could make very interesting articles on the subject. Should you however wish for articles on historical subjects, I will try to write, if we can agree on terms. The Harpers give me $5.00 per page for what I could write for their Monthly Magazine. This rate, according to a cast I have made, would be about $3.75 for one of the columns of the Record. But abating the 75 cts. I will write for $3.00 per column. I would suggest for a subject a biographical sketch of Ira Allen, which is greatly needed, as very little has been written about him; while no man probably did so much for Vermont as he. He was, I have thought, the most talented man of all the early actors who shaped the destinies of this state. Other unappropriated ground in Vt. history might also be found.

Yours repectfully,

D. P. Thompson.

Evidently Milliken met Thompson's terms, for the "Life, Character and Times of Ira Allen" appeared in the *Vermont Record* (of Brandon) in fifteen issues of volume XI, between August and December, 1864.

The closing years of our author's life were marked by unfortunate circumstances. Failing health forced him to live in a semi-retirement which, with his limited means, he could hardly afford.[1] At the close of the Civil

[1] This is the testimony of one of the older residents of Montpelier who knew Thompson at that time.

War he was seventy years old. His active career was over. For more than forty years he had been prominently identified with the life of Montpelier, always as a lawyer but more conspicuously as a public official, an author, a lecturer, editor, and historian. Surely he was now entitled to a rest, that is, to uninterrupted leisure for writing. But what with domestic cares, lack of money, sickness, and the usual infirmities of old age, he was unable to accomplish much literary work. In his sixty-ninth year he began another novel, *The Honest Lawyer*, but this book he left uncompleted at the time of his death.[1] For several years he suffered recurrent partial strokes of paralysis which greatly impaired his health. Specimens of his handwriting at this time show the wavering line characteristic of unsteady nerves. The final attack came in his seventy-third year. He died on Saturday night, June 6, 1868. He was buried in Green Mount Cemetery, Montpelier, on the following Tuesday, June 9.[2]

By the few men now living who knew Judge Thompson, he is remembered as an old-fashioned Yankee. Their picture of him reveals a spare, rawboned man, slightly above medium height, slovenly in dress, and retiring. He could hardly be called a typical Yankee, because he was too intensely individual to be typically anything; if the word were not hackneyed, we might call him an original. True, he had all the native shrewdness and droll humor of the Yankee, but even his fellow

[1] The manuscript of this unfinished novel, which was supposed to have been lost, is in the possession of Mr. Charles M. Thompson. Through the courtesy of Mr. Thompson it is published in this volume.

[2] *Green Mountain Freeman*, June 10, 1868. Biographical sketches appeared in the Vermont *Watchman* (Montpelier), on June 10, 1868, and in the *Freeman*, on July 1, 1868.

townsmen seem to have regarded him as somewhat eccentric. He always walked with a preoccupied air in the middle of the road. If he were going fishing, he would carry a long bamboo pole over his shoulder, wear his overalls with one suspender attached, one leg drawn over his boot, and the other inside; he would wear a broad-brimmed straw hat, he would be chewing tobacco, and without looking to the right or left would walk on through the village lost in abstraction. The small boys in the neighborhood would run after him and ask him to tell them stories about the Indians. His kindness to children is proverbial in Montpelier. Occasionally he took boys with him when he went fishing, and he often invited them into his home, and, gathering them about the fireplace, related stories of the early settlement, adventures with the Indians, King Philip's War, and the exploits of Ethan Allen, Seth Warner, and Remember Baker.

Among Judge Thompson's intimate friends during the latter part of his life was the Reverend William H. Lord, who was pastor of the Congregational Church. An anecdote concerning Judge Thompson is related by a surviving member of Mr. Lord's congregation.[1] Perhaps it would be best to give this bit of reminiscence at first hand.

> Well, I remember Dan P. as he sat in his tall squareback pew at the old Congo. church, two pews ahead of ours. His favorite pose was looking up, his head resting on his hand, his elbow on the end of the pew, his eyes closed. He was a tall, raw-boned man that would attract attention. One Sunday while he sat there apparently asleep, in came a very large dog of his, put up his paws and began to lap his face. Well, between that and the war-whoop I let out . . . the whole con-

[1] Mr. George W. Scribner of Queen City Park, Vt.

gregation was in an uproar. Even Dr. Lord, the minister, took a hand. And then D. P. made a break with the dog for the door. It was some time before Mr. Lord could get his face back in line.

It is curious, indeed, how local tradition has preserved Thompson's striking external characteristics. Perhaps one reason for this is that none of his intimate friends has ever left a written account of any length (upon which tradition could grow), and those who are now old enough to remember him were still quite young when Thompson was an elderly man. They recall the striking things about his appearance rather than the things he said. Almost the first impression one gets of the man, in talking with those who knew him by sight, is his uncouthness; one person remembers seeing him with his shoes tied with strings for laces, another says that he always looked as if he needed a hair-cut, another that he was careless in chewing tobacco, another that he liked his toddy, but was never a heavy drinker, and so on; but all agree that he was slovenly, and all agree that he was universally esteemed, especially among the boys. And the instinctive popular respect which he inspired reflects the kindliness of his disposition no less than the ruggedness of his character. But it does more than that — it reflects the absorbing interest with which his uncultivated genius for telling a story invested even the simplest tales of adventure.

On the other hand, it is clear that Thompson was not regarded as a novelist of the first order even in Montpelier. Perhaps it was his friend E. P. Walton who wrote the following shrewd comment, which appeared in the Vermont *Watchman* for June 10, 1868: "Though he was not of high rank either for genius, or grace as a

writer, yet his books strike the average of readers favorably, and will be read and remembered when even better literary performances will be forgotten."

We find a fitting conclusion to our biography of Thompson in the following words, inscribed on the tablet erected to his memory in 1915 by the State of Vermont.

Daniel Pierce Thompson, at once a novelist, an historian, a student and a gentleman, at an early day by his researches and the ability with which nature endowed him gathered a wealth of material dealing with Vermont and clothed it in words which will be read with pleasure and profit by generations yet unborn.

He who faithfully records the deeds of heroes and pioneers plays his full part in the consummation of their benefit to posterity.

Part II

THOMPSON AS A WRITER

CHAPTER III

TALES OF THE GREEN MOUNTAINS

BETWEEN *The Adventures of Timothy Peacock* and *May Martin* there is a sharp break in Thompson's literary work. The former we have already discussed as a product of anti-Masonic excitement reacting on a temperament averse to secret orders; and now, before proceeding to the main subject of our chapter, let us briefly consider this odd political satire as a piece of literature.

From a literary point of view *The Adventures of Timothy Peacock* is certainly far inferior to any other book that Thompson wrote. It is bad even as a first effort. Perhaps it may charitably be regarded as an unfortunate experiment in satire and caricature. Obviously suggested by Cervantes, it is feebly imitative of the manner of Smollett in *The Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves*, and possibly also of Hugh Brackenridge in *Modern Chivalry*. The name "Timothy Peacock" may have been suggested by Smollett's Timothy Crabshaw and Nathaniel Peacock, or it may have been the name of a Masonic acquaintance, or perhaps the result of mere chance; at any rate, Timothy Peacock suggests a caricature of an eighteenth-century English squire transplanted into a New England environment. The fun of this picaresque story is almost entirely horseplay. It is a juvenile performance that might have been written by a man of less ability than the author of *The Green Mountain Boys*. One is mildly amused at Thompson's resentment of the attitude of Nathaniel P. Willis toward Vermont, though

not with his manner of expressing it: "Timothy found himself, as a certain literary dandy, who is now receiving 'Impressions' among the naked Venuses of Italy, has been pleased to express it, 'out of the world and in Vermont.'" [1] At rare intervals he bursts forth into such Hudibrastic doggerel as

> As men from brutes, distinguished are,
> A Mason other men excels!

And again, speaking of the Masons,

> Hope with good conscience to heaven to climb,
> And give Peter the grip, the password and sign!

A resumé of this Masonic Quixote's adventures may well be omitted.

On the other hand, Thompson's first substantial literary performance merits careful consideration. At the time of its first appearance in the *New England Galaxy* the story of *May Martin, or the Money Diggers* proved so popular that publishers of books and periodicals, taking advantage of the inadequate copyright laws, pirated it directly from the pages of the magazine. We have previously noted that unauthorized copies appeared in England.[2] Before the first English edition of *May Martin* came out, however, it is said that Mary Russell Mitford had procured an American copy of the book and had plagiarized passages from it. In the exact words of Thompson's anonymous biographer, who repeated the statement: "John G. Saxe, a reliable authority, states that previous to its unauthorized publication in Eng-

[1] *Adventures of Timothy Peacock*, p. 27.

[2] The best-known (and perhaps the first) English edition was that in The Romanticists' and Novelists' Library, vol. i, 1841. W. Hazlitt, the younger, was editor of this collection. The title of this edition was *May Martin, or Money Diggers. A Green Mountain Tale.*

land the famous Miss Mitford had obtained an American copy of the work, and appropriated many passages from its contents. David Butler, one of his prominent characters, was bodily transferred to one of her most admired tales, in which he appears as a hero." [1]

That the author of *Our Village*, professedly an admirer of Jane Austen, and incidentally an imitator of Irving, should "appropriate many passages" from a tale of money-diggers in Vermont written in a style far less finished than her own, appears on the face of it highly improbable. What are the facts? Assuming that Miss Mitford did obtain an American copy of *May Martin*, it remains to be proved that she appropriated material from it in one of her own books (or stories) subsequent to March, 1835. This immediately eliminates *Belford Regis*, the preface of which is dated "Feb. 25th. 1835." There remain: *Country Stories* (1837), a series of short sketches evidently written during 1836; extracts from *Finden's Tableaux* (1837); and *Atherton and other Tales* (1854). In none of these books is there the slightest evidence of plagiarism so far as matter or style is concerned; as for the character of David Butler, only in one of the Country Stories (*Jesse Cliff*) and possibly in *Atherton* can a boy at all resembling him be found. But what slight resemblance there is might easily be accidental. It is far more likely that Thompson himself got the idea of such a remarkable boy from Scott,[2] although, to be sure, the actual original of this doubtless exaggerated character did exist in the flesh.

With all its imperfections, *May Martin* is essentially a folk book. Its source is to be found in local tradition;

[1] *Biog. Encyc. Vt.*, p. 257.

[2] Perhaps from Flibbertigibbit or Eddie Ochiltree.

its setting is local; and its plot is founded mainly on fact. Indeed, the incidents on which the story is based became known to Thompson in the course of his practice of law.[1] The book gives a real picture of native life and character, although highly colored with a sentimental romance that suggests eighteenth-century English models. It is intensely interesting to an uncritical reader who likes realism and excitement. It might be revived to-day as a book for boys, but it could be regarded by the sophisticated reader only as a somewhat interesting literary curiosity. That it is still in print, however, is evidence enough of its vitality.

The belief in buried treasure in Vermont is traced by the author to a story related by a foot-traveller who had come down from lower Canada soon after the Revolutionary War. In substance it was as follows. At the close of the French and Indian Wars, when the country was still in an unsettled condition, a small band of adventurers who had discovered in Mexico a large treasure, consisting of gold and silver, returned to New York and attempted to travel by land either from there or from Albany to Montreal and Quebec. Taking the usual route along Lake Champlain, they reached the vicinity of Crown Point, but as they feared an ambuscade by another party, whose object they believed was to plunder them, they struck off from the lake, and found a secluded spot in the Green Mountains (afterwards said to be Camel's Hump), where they buried their gold and silver. It was stated also that they performed incanta-

[1] Duyckinck, *Cyclopedia*, i, 944. Of *May Martin* is written: " . . . this well told story was founded on incidents of actual occurrence in his neighborhood, with which he had become acquainted in the course of his professional business." These incidents are related in his introduction to the revised edition of 1850. This introduction is reprinted in later editions.

MONTPELIER IN THE FORTIES

From an old woodcut

tions over the spot, which, according to the superstition of the times, prevented any but the rightful owners from regaining the money. They then entered into a compact, prompted by a common jealousy, not to return to the place except in company, and only at a time to be agreed upon by future appointment. Having agreed to this, they now pushed on to one of the lower settlements of Canada and there dispersed, never to meet again as a group. When the last survivor of the band found himself too old to return to Camel's Hump, he imparted his secret to a certain man (not identified), whose account, originally told in confidence to a surveyor, leaked out, gradually became known somewhat widely, and thus gave rise to the legend of the buried treasure.

Although the original search for this gold, based on the adventurer's story, was abandoned after fruitless efforts, a circumstance occurred some years later that revived the story and prompted the only attempt at money-digging ever made in Vermont. The remains of a rude furnace and several crucibles, such as are used in smelting precious metal, were discovered by a scientist in the course of an excursion on Camel's Hump; and this circumstance, immediately connected as it was with the Canadian adventurer's story, led to the formation of two companies that set forth in quest of the buried money. The first group disbanded after a day or two of idle search, but the second company made a more systematic attempt, and, to the novelist, a much more romantic one.

And it was the doings of this secret and sworn band of adventurers, with some circumstances connected with the locality of their operations, which furnished all the hints for the story of the *Money Diggers*, as it was christened at the outset,

but to which, as, in the progress of the tale, it was perceived that its main interest would turn on the destinies of the heroine, was added, or rather prefixed, the name of *May Martin*.[1]

To the dramatic incidents subsequently related by one of the members of this company, Thompson added certain inferences of his own to make up the main plot of the novel. Thus it is clear that, although the original idea or story of buried treasure was shrouded in a mist of hearsay and tradition, the actual incidents which the novelist employed in writing his story were authentic. Briefly stated, the facts are as follows. The company was organized by a somewhat mysterious stranger who had come into Harwood Settlement, probably from Canada, and, catching the drift of local gossip about the gold and silver hidden in the neighboring mountains, secretly banded together some of the younger men of the village for the purpose of discovering the treasure. He appeared to be well informed on the subject, pretending to have obtained his knowledge from the last survivor of the original band in Canada. To make the assertion appear more probable, he made several trips to Canada while forming his company. He also added certain interesting details to the original story, such as the murdering of a man by the company, and burying him with the money to prevent any from obtaining it but those "initiated in the art of laying the ghost." He then led his band to the secluded spot in the mountain which he had selected as the scene of operation. The action from this point is given with but slight enlargement in *May Martin*. So much for the facts.

[1] *May Martin* (rev. ed., 1850), pp. 17, 18. The above is a condensed account of the story of the money-diggers as given in the introduction to the revised edition. For a somewhat different version of the same incidents, see Hemenway's *Vermont Gazetteer*, iv, 1241.

The inferences that the author drew from the foregoing account are: that this young man was doubtless a counterfeiter, and a member of a band of counterfeit-money dealers formed by the notorious Stephen Burroughs;[1] and that these counterfeiters had their rendezvous in some of the southeastern townships of lower Canada, from which they would carry their trade over the line into Vermont and other northern states. It will be observed that these inferences add motive and interest to the account as previously given, without detracting from the atmosphere of mystery. It is well to note, in passing, the author's interest in counterfeiting, for in at least two other stories — *The Rustic Financiers* and *The Counterfeiter* — he recurs to this fascinating subject.

Before writing his novel Thompson made a trip to the wild country in the neighborhood of Camel's Hump. Here, while looking over the ground where the already-mentioned events occurred, he noticed a partly settled glen, almost entirely surrounded by towering mountains.

> And here [he tells us] I was induced to make some inquiries respecting the original ownership and settlement of the valley. And the simple fact thus elicited, that it had once been mostly owned by a wealthy landholder of one of our Atlantic cities,

[1] Stephen Burroughs (born, Hanover, N. H., 1765), the notorious adventurer, whose *Memoirs* (1811) were widely read in New England, spent the latter part of his life in Canada, where for many years he was the head of a band of counterfeiters. It was this phase of his career, and particularly the activity of his pupils and associates in Vermont, that interested the novelist. As a lawyer Thompson came into contact with the work of the counterfeiters, and made use of this experience in writing the story mentioned above. But Burroughs was not only a counterfeiter, he had also been, since leaving Dartmouth, a privateersman, ship's physician, schoolmaster, and Congregational preacher (under an assumed name). After a long career as a counterfeiter, he reformed, united with the Roman Catholic Church, and supported himself by educating the sons of wealthy Canadians at his home, where he had a valuable library. He was respected by all, despite his career. He died in Three Rivers, Canada, in 1840.

who bequeathed it to a grand-daughter, who married a plain but enterprising young man, an occasional resident of the place, furnished, with one or two other circumstances connected with the character and career of one of the early settlers, the slight superstructure of facts on which was founded the fortunes of *May Martin*.[1]

The literary descent of *May Martin* is not so plainly traced. The author, though adopting many of the tricks of the older novelists such as Richardson, and some of their stock types and sentiments, owed less than most writers to literary precedent. His indebtedness to Scott and to Cooper, however, — both then at the height of their popularity in the United States, — is at once apparent. For even if the characters of *May Martin* were drawn from life, and its plot from local incidents, there cannot be the slightest doubt that the idea of such procedure was suggested by the example of Scott. Had Thompson lived in the eighteenth century he might have written history, or possibly romance, but not historical romance. And this may be said with equal truth of Simms, Kennedy, Bird, and all the other novelists of the school of Cooper. For it was Scott who established a literature of local patriotism and who made the antiquarian study of the past popular. Several interesting parallels may be seen, incidentally, in the careers of Thompson and Scott. Both had historic and antiquarian enthusiasms, both lived in a period of transition, both came into contact with a relatively primitive society and folk-lore, and finally both became lawyers, held minor public office, turned to fiction late in life (one when thirty-nine years old, the other when forty-three), and wrote mainly historical novels. There the similar-

[1] *May Martin*, pp. 21, 22.

ity ends, and ends abruptly. It will serve, nevertheless, to show why under fairly similar conditions a young Vermont antiquarian, coming under the influence of this original genius, inevitably turned to the heroic past of his native state for material and inspiration, and to the historical romance for his medium of expression. It must not be forgotten, however, that if Scott set the example, it was Cooper who showed Thompson how to follow it.[1]

Other tales of the Green Mountains, which originally appeared as *Lucy Hosmer; or the Guardian and the Ghost* (1848) and *The Shaker Lovers and Other Tales* (1852), were gathered together by the novelist and published in the revised edition of *May Martin and Other Tales of the Green Mountains* (1852). Of these stories — there were seven in all — *The Guardian and the Ghost* (as it was named in the revised edition) and *The Shaker Lovers* are much the longest and by far the most interesting. The scene of the former is laid in a small village near the Connecticut River. The story is concerned with the attempt of one Jude Hosmer to defraud his orphan niece, Lucy, of her father's estate, and with the frustration of his scheme by a hoax practised upon him by his servant. It seems that when Lucy Hosmer's father died he reluctantly left his estate to be administered by his brother, Jude Hosmer, who was to act as guardian to Lucy. Losing his own money in speculations, Jude secretly takes over Lucy's estate, settling with his niece for a mere three hundred dollars. Meanwhile, he turns away Lucy's suitor, a young village lawyer by the name of Lot Fisher, whom he fears because of a rightly suspected connection

[1] Thompson's indebtedness to Cooper is discussed in chapter IV in reference to *The Green Mountain Boys*, and in chapter VI in reference to *The Rangers*.

with Squire Stacy. Stacy distrusts Jude, having been admonished by the dying brother quietly to look after Lucy's interests. Accordingly, he concocts a scheme with Shack Rogers, man-of-all-work for Jude, whereby Shack is to frighten his master into returning Lucy's estate. Meanwhile, Jude has bribed an old hag to call Lot Fisher her son in the hearing of the village gossips; in this way he succeeds in estranging the two lovers, for Lucy now ceases to have anything to do with Lot. Beginning at this time, however, the old man is disturbed at night by unearthly groans near his bed-chamber; he hears his brother's mournful voice speaking to him; finally he sees a ghost flit through the room. He becomes panic-stricken; his hair turns white over night. Smitten by a troubled conscience, he gives to Lucy all he had held back of her father's estate, and then, having reconciled the two lovers, he is present at their marriage. Immediately after the wedding, however, Shack Rogers, in a fit of anger at Jude's rough treatment of him, whispers in the old man's ear the hoax he had played upon him. Enraged at the deception, Jude makes a desperate effort to regain the papers, but before he can reach them the violence of his emotion brings on a cerebral hemorrhage and he dies instantly. This story, the author tells us in his preface, is based upon incidents of actual occurrence; and he adds, "Should . . . any of the respectable descendants of one of the two strangely contrasted brothers whom we have introduced discover — as we rather fear than hope they may — the originals of the likenesses we have attempted to sketch, we trust they will not deem the character of the one too severely drawn, or that of the other too highly flattered." [1]

[1] *May Martin* (rev. ed.), p. 163.

The scene of *The Shaker Lovers* is a Shaker community in northern New Hampshire. The two lovers, Seth Gilmore and Martha Hilson, are forbidden by Elder Higgins, in pretended accordance with Quaker law, to meet each other and are kept in ignorance of the outside world. Higgins, who is a strange compound of fanatic and voluptuary, has designs upon Martha. Seth is an orphan placed in this establishment by a well-to-do uncle through the influence of a scheming nephew. Dissatisfied with the life of drudgery and the ignorance imposed by Shaker customs, Seth attempts to escape; he is tracked by Higgins to a skiff on the neighboring pond, and there thrown overboard; he now pretends to drown, thus deceiving his pursuer. News of his drowning is spread through the community; everyone, including Martha, has given him up for lost. Four weeks later a vagabond appears at the establishment and secretly gives Martha a letter from Seth. On a prearranged signal Martha escapes with Seth in a surrey, and the two lovers are married. This story, like those which follow it (namely, *Ethan Allan and the Lost Children*, *The Young Sea Captain*, *The Old Soldier's Story*, *A New Way to Collect a Bad Debt*, and *An Indian's Revenge*), is said by its author to be founded more strictly on facts than any of his other compositions. Only the slight variations due to the introduction of scenery and dialogue, and "the exercise of the licence generally conceded to the writer of such stories," are made by Thompson in the accounts he received from the actors themselves (as in *The Shaker Lovers*) or from old settlers (as in *Ethan Allen and the Lost Children*).

Although Thompson's later tales of the Green Mountains are inferior in interest to *May Martin*, they defi-

nitely show an advance in style and diction, if not in the actual handling of incident and dialogue. Between 1835 and 1848, however, the author had written *The Green Mountain Boys* and *Locke Amsden;* there is no reason why he should not have improved his diction and, indeed, his technique. Nevertheless, it is as clear from these later tales as it is from his last novel, *Centeola*, that Thompson could never attain a perfect command of language or a finished style. For this he lacked training — early and late. On the other hand, despite obvious defects of style and diction which persisted to the end, his uncultivated genius for telling a story invested even the simplest tales of adventure with absorbing interest.

Indeed, this native faculty of telling a straight story plainly and rapidly — shown, for example, in his ability to hold the attention of restless lads by the hour with his tales of the settlement and the Revolution — has done more than anything else to make his books popular and give them vitality. And it is probably true — although it cannot be proved — that a realization of this power, growing out of the interest with which neighbors and friends listened to his stories, and stimulated by reawakened hopes of authorship, prompted him to experiment with a written tale like *May Martin*. As we have seen, the winning of a prize offered by the *New England Galaxy* led to the publication of that book. Its instant popular success inevitably led the author to further experimenting. Thus, having written a realistic tale of adventure drawn from local materials and setting, he was now to experiment with an historical romance of the Revolutionary War far surpassing *May Martin* in the interest of its subject and enough superior in its narrative qualities to make it "the classic of Vermont."

CHAPTER IV

THE GREEN MOUNTAIN BOYS

SOON after the publication of *The Green Mountain Boys*, Judge Thompson received from Longfellow the following letter.

Cambridge, Nov. 12, 1839.

DEAR SIR,

Not till a week ago did I receive your letter of October 16 with the copy of the "Green Mountain Boys" you were so kind as to send. I have not yet had time to read your work; but have had too much curiosity not to look into it and read some chapters. Judging from these portions, I doubt not you have written a very stirring and interesting novel for such as love to contemplate the stern face of history reflected in the mirror of romance. I shall read it as soon as I have time to read it properly, — that is not too carelessly.

In regard to reviewing it, you must excuse me if I decline undertaking it. Since I have become an author myself, I feel exceedingly unwilling to play the part of critic. Do you not feel this yourself? You say: "a faithful critique, I should be gratified to see; that I might leave my faults as a writer, and correct them — my powers, if any I have, and improve them!" I am sorry to hear you say this. You know your powers better than any critic can tell them to you. The very impulse from within, urging you to write after the labors of the day — this restlessness to be doing, — is an evidence of power. Choose wisely how to direct it. From the feeling within you must work — not from what the critics say. . . .

Permit me to thank you for your book, and to send you in return a copy of "Voices of the Night," a collection of Poems, which I will leave for you with Mr. Muzzy,[1] as soon as it is published.

Very respectfully yours,

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

[1] For source of this letter see note 1, p. 50.

P. S. Excuse, also, my freedom in speaking to you thus of criticism; and allow me to ask if a copy of your book has been sent to the Editor of the N. A. Review.[1]

Whether Thompson forwarded a copy of *The Green Mountain Boys* to the *North American Review* we do not know, but certainly no review or critical notice of it ever appeared in that periodical. Indeed, neither then nor at any time since did the book receive from critics the consideration it really deserved. One explanation of this indifference was given in a review of *The Rangers* which appeared in *The Literary World*[2] in 1851.

The author — unheard of in this latitude — is known in England by his "Green Mountain Boys," which was republished there, and met with cordial success. Being issued, however, in cheap form, it was not deemed worthy of the attention of the great guns of the press, and so the chance for popularity at home, which would have inevitably followed, was lost.[3]

This explanation is partly true. Books published in cheap editions did not as a rule command the respect of

[1] Mr. Mussey, Thompson's publisher?

[2] In *The Literary World* for June 17, 1848, appeared the only critical notice of any length that *The Green Mountain Boys* received even during the period of its greatest popularity. It is short enough to quote in full:

"This is a new and neat edition of a well-known work, which has been before the public some ten or a dozen years. It is a tale of border warfare, and the incidents are based on actual occurrences; which, if they impart to it little sectional character, at least give it the advantage of local interest. The author is more felicitous in the descriptive and narrative portions than in the delineation of individual character or in dialogue; nor do we think that he would have prejudiced the cause of his hero and his party, by allotting some of the minor virtues at least to their adversaries, for though the contrast would have been less striking, the harmony would have been more natural. To our taste, as we have hinted, the descriptions constitute the best features of the book, and exhibit the author's powers to the best advantage."

[3] Vol. viii, no. 222 (May 3, 1851). E. A. and G. L. Duyckinck were the editors of *The Literary World* at that time, and it is quite probable that one of these brothers wrote the review in question.

critics, and consequently their authors did not become widely known among cultivated readers. It is true that recognition of an American book by the English press would almost immediately raise its author from obscurity and make him known from Maine to Texas. But it is not true that books overlooked by influential critics were necessarily doomed to unpopularity. Indeed, it would be hard to find a more convincing refutation of this notion than the remarkable popularity of *The Green Mountain Boys*, mainly, of course, with uncritical readers to whom book reviews are not literary guides. The records show that fifty editions of the book were sold by 1860, and sixty editions before the end of the century.[1] In 1912 seven editions were still in print. Recently an authority on the American novel referred to this book as "by far the most popular romance in the immediate school of Cooper." [2] It has now taken its place in American literature as a standard book for boys.

That *The Green Mountain Boys* has been far more widely known than its author is not surprising in view of the circumstances of Thompson's life. Isolation in Vermont, lack of contact with other authors such as Cooper, Kennedy, and Simms, failure to receive recognition from critics, and also, of course, lack of training and the amateurish quality of much of his work, have inevitably kept Judge Thompson in comparative obscurity. On the other hand, the patriotic appeal of his historical tales, no less than their vigorous narrative power and homely realism, gave them currency among readers of Cooper and Scott throughout the period between 1840 and 1860, when historical fiction was still

[1] Besides the London edition of 1840 a German translation of *The Green Mountain Boys* was published at Leipzig about 1853–1858.

[2] C. Van Doren, *The American Novel*, p. 58.

in vogue. And the vitality of his best work — such as, for example, *The Green Mountain Boys* — has kept his chief novels in print even to the present day.

Since *The Green Mountain Boys* is concerned with the struggles of the Vermonters for independence, first from New York and then from Great Britain, it may be well to examine the historical background of the novel before proceeding to an analysis of its plot. First of all let us briefly review the pertinent facts of the land-grant controversy between New York and New Hampshire.[1]

The dispute originated in 1749, when Governor Wentworth of New Hampshire notified Governor Clinton of New York that he intended to grant unimproved lands within his jurisdiction under instructions received from King George II. The government of New Hampshire, by virtue of a royal decree made in 1740,[2] held that its jurisdiction extended as far west as that of Massachusetts, that is, to a line twenty miles east of the Hudson River. Governor Clinton held, however, that Massachusetts had at first simply possessed herself of the lands by intrusion and continued in possession through the negligence of the New York government. Respecting the new township of Bennington, he contended that the lands embraced within it had already been granted by

[1] Vermont did not become a state until March, 1791. Its territory was known as the New Hampshire Grants because of the granting of unimproved land therein by Governor Benning Wentworth of the Royal Province of New Hampshire. Governor Wentworth granted the township of Bennington (named in his honor) as early as 1749.

[2] E. B. O'Callaghan, *Documentary History of New York*, iv, 331, 332. King George had determined "that the northern boundary of Massachusetts be a similar curve line pursuing the course of the Merrimack River at three miles distance on the north side thereof, beginning at the Atlantic Ocean and ending at a point due north of the place called Pautucket Falls, and by a straight line drawn from thence due west till it meets with his Majesty's other governments."

his government. He therefore suggested that the New Hampshire grant be recalled or he would be obliged to send a representation of the matter to the King.[1] The Council of New Hampshire advised Governor Wentworth to submit the whole question to the King and to acquiesce in whatever decision the latter should make. At the same time Wentworth and the New York government agreed to exchange copies of their petition to the King.[2] But, according to the report of the Council of New York in November, 1753, Wentworth failed to carry out his agreement. The controversy continued in this manner until 1754, when the French and Indian War temporarily put an end to applications for grants.

After the capture of Montreal in 1760 and the virtual close of the war, the granting of lands in the disputed territory was resumed. During the following year sixty townships were granted by Governor Wentworth on the west side of the Connecticut River, and within two years one hundred and eight grants were made, extending to a line twenty miles east of the Hudson and to the eastern shore of Lake Champlain.[3] This, of course, did not escape the attention of the New York government; and, as a result, the controversy became more complicated.

It is sufficient for our purpose, as we have previously suggested, to summarize the more important incidents which led up to the situation described in the opening pages of *The Green Mountain Boys*. When the New York government learned of the continued activity of New Hampshire surveyors in laying out lands on the

[1] E. B. O'Callaghan, *op. cit.*, iv, 534.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 333.

[3] R. Robinson, *Vermont, a Study of Independence*, p. 59. Chapter 4, on the New Hampshire Grants, is an excellent brief treatment of the subject.

east side of Lake Champlain, and of their claim that Crown Point was within the limits of the New Hampshire government, Lieutenant-Governor Colden issued a proclamation to the effect that the Connecticut River was the dividing line between the two provinces. Accordingly he directed the sheriff of Albany County to bring legal proceedings against all persons who took up land west of the Connecticut under the grants of New Hampshire. This proclamation was issued in December, 1763. Three months later Governor Wentworth issued a proclamation in which he denied the claims of New York. As a result, the government of New York appealed to the Crown.

The King's decision that the western bank of the Connecticut River should be considered the dividing line between the two provinces served only to intensify the controversy, for the inhabitants of the grants interpreted the decision to mean that no further grants were to be made by New Hampshire west of the Connecticut, and not to mean that the titles of their land, already purchased in good faith, were to be invalidated. But the government of New York interpreted the royal order as retroactive, that is, as annulling the grants made by Governor Wentworth in the previously disputed territory. As a result, the New Hampshire grantees were ordered to surrender their charters, and to repurchase their own property from the New York government. This unreasonable measure defined the issue. In the first place, the New York officials attempted to dispossess those settlers who refused to take out new patents. Then the settlers themselves called a convention of their own representatives, who sent one of their number (Samuel Robinson of Bennington) to England to present their

grievances to the King. The result was an order (issued in 1767) from the Privy Council to the governor of New York, that he "do not, upon pain of his Majesty's highest displeasure, presume to make any grant whatsoever of any part of the lands described, until his Majesty's further pleasure shall be known concerning the same."

The government of New York nevertheless continued to issue new patents for land not already granted by New Hampshire, and attempted to enforce them through its courts at Albany. In fact, the Supreme Court went so far as to refuse to admit as evidence the grants made by the governor of New Hampshire. When Ethan Allen, who was present at the suits in question, was urged by New York officials to persuade the settlers to come to terms, they reminding him that "might often prevails over right," he is said to have replied, "The gods of the valleys are not the gods of the hills." To the attorney-general who asked him what he meant he replied that if he would accompany him to Bennington Hill, it would be made plain to him.[1]

Not long after this incident Sheriff Ten Eyck of Albany, with a posse of seven hundred and fifty armed militia, went to Bennington to eject one James Brackenridge from his farm. The New York posse was intimidated, however, by the so-called Bennington mob, a company of some three hundred undisciplined provincials who, on this occasion, lay in ambush near Brackenridge's house. The sheriff, seeing himself opposed by armed men, immediately returned to Albany. The incident is not in itself important, but it is significant as an illustration of the resistance offered by the grantees to an attempt made by New York officials to enforce their

[1] Z. Thompson, *Vermont*, part II, p. 21.

claims. Committees of Safety were organized in several towns of the grants, and soon a rude military force was assembled under the leadership of Colonel-Commandant Ethan Allen. Such men as Seth Warner, Remember Baker, Robert Cockran, and Peleg Sunderland served with Allen as captains, and of these intrepid backwoodsmen Warner, though less conspicuous than Allen, was perhaps his equal as a military leader.

This volunteer force of armed settlers soon became known as the Green Mountain Boys because the governor of New York had threatened to drive them back into the Green Mountains.[1] Their leader, Ethan Allen, was indeed something of a modern Robin Hood. Outlawed by Governor Tryon for his exploits in burning down the log-houses of "Yorkers" and in applying the "beech seal" to Albany surveyors and "land-jobbers," he was hailed as a hero by all true Vermonters. Although in 1771 a reward of twenty pounds had been offered for his arrest, and three years later this amount had been raised to one hundred pounds, he not only continued to resist with violence what he considered as the encroachments of New York agents, but also defended the conduct of the Green Mountain Boys as, in the circumstances, justified.[2]

After the capture of Fort Ticonderoga, Ethan Allen, of course, became one of the minor Revolutionary heroes, and as the fame of his exploits was kept alive in a myth-making age partly at least by his own *Memoirs* and other writings, it followed that his version of the land-grant struggle found ready acceptance in Vermont. The

[1] I. Allen, *History of Vermont*, p. 345.

[2] J. Sparks, *Life of Ethan Allen* (vol. i in Library of American Biography). See also the *Memoirs* of Ethan Allen.

judgment of the scientific historian does not here concern us. But we are interested to know that the Ethan Allen of local tradition, as revealed largely in his own writings, is the hero of Thompson's romance. Let us allow the leader of the Green Mountain Boys to speak for himself:

> If we do not oppose the sheriff and his posse, he takes immediate possession of our houses and farms; if we do, we are immediately indicted as rioters; and when others oppose officers in taking their friends so indicted, they are also indicted, and so on, there being no end of indictment against us so long as we act the bold and manly part and stand by our liberty.[1]

And further:

> Though they style us rioters for opposing them, and seek to catch and punish us as such, yet in reality themselves are the rioters, the tumultuous, disorderly stimulating faction, or in fine the land-jobbers; every violent act they have done to compass their designs, though ever so much under pretence of law, is in reality a violation of law . . . and coloring a crime with a specious pretence of law only adds to the criminality of it, for it subverts the very design of law, prostituting it to the vilest purposes.[2]

This is precisely the view held by Judge Thompson as shown in his treatment of the matter in *The Green Mountain Boys*. It is obviously the view of a partisan, but even a disinterested historian must concede the force of the argument. And although the novelist is biased, he is none the less sincere. The sophisticated reader of 1840 may have regarded Ethan Allen and Seth Warner as picturesque outlaws engaged in a guerilla warfare marked by horseplay, but the novelist himself

[1] E. Allen, *Brief Narrative of the Proceedings of the Government of New York*, p. 58.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 62.

looked upon them as real heroes staking their lives in a struggle for independence. Moreover, Thompson did not write for sophisticated readers; on the contrary, he appealed to a somewhat uncritical audience (always in the majority) whose interest in the Revolution and the frontier had already been aroused by Cooper. In describing the encounter between Sheriff Munroe of Albany and Captain Warrington, the author spares no pains to make the former offensive to the reader; and in the account he gives of the chastisement of the scoundrel Jake Sherwood,[1] he makes one feel at once the force and the restraint of that rude, improvised justice administered by indignant settlers who could not carry their case to court. The villain is, of course, a secret agent of a company of New York land-jobbers, posing as a grantee of New Hampshire. It is only fair to add, however, that despite the novelist's sympathy with the Vermont cause, he never wilfully misrepresents historical incident or personage.

The scene of the novel embraces in turn Lake Dunmore, the region about Otter Creek, the eastern shore of Lake Champlain, Skenesboro, and Fort Ticonderoga. The action begins in the latter part of April, 1775, and reaches its highest point about two weeks later in the capture of the British fortress. In thus bringing incidents of the New York controversy into close proximity to the outbreak of the Revolution, Thompson deliberately sacrificed strict chronological sequence to dramatic effect, or, as he puts it in the preface, "for the sake of more unity of design." This explanation is all

[1] This incident was literally true. Sherwood, as pictured in the novel, though obviously overdrawn, can still be identified with the historical personage, Justus Sherwood. See Hemenway's *Vermont Gazetteer*, i, 70, 71.

that can be urged in defence of an obvious anachronism, but it is sufficient. Literal historical accuracy is at best only a minor virtue even in a fiction of this kind. Still, our author did not think so; he placed great emphasis on the historical aspect of his novels. Accordingly, we shall discuss the question more fully in its proper place.

The opening scene is laid on the northern shore of Lake Dunmore. In the darkness of late evening a small party of Green Mountain Boys has been tracked to a cave near the bank of the lake by Sheriff Munroe and a posse of ten armed men, with Sherwood acting as their guide. Captain Warrington and his aide, Lieutenant Selden, are hiding in the cave, while the rest of their party is lurking behind trees in the nearest surrounding coverts. The sheriff calls upon Warrington to surrender, but the latter refuses. Suddenly distracted by a screech, like that of a catamount, in the thicket above, the sheriff and his men are pounced upon by the Green Mountain Boys, carried to the margin of the lake, and hurled headlong over the bank. Meanwhile Sherwood, who has tried to escape, is captured by Pete Jones, a member of Warrington's party. The Green Mountain Boys, having now eluded the posse, decide to punish Sherwood as a traitor for disclosing their hiding-place to the sheriff.[1] After a farcical lynch trial, the prisoner is chastised with "the twigs of the wilderness," or, in other words, he is whipped thirty-nine times on the back with a green beech rod known as the beech seal. When all the members of the party have dealt their apportioned share of the blows, Sherwood is dismissed with a warn-

[1] Sherwood had for some time been suspected of secretly speculating in patents issued by the New York government, but in this case he is punished for the specific offence cited.

ing not to repeat his offence. Thompson assures the reader, however, that the Green Mountain Boys administered the beech seal only in cases of extreme necessity, and then with as much humanity as could be reasonably expected.

The scene now shifts to the clearing of the widow Story[1] on Otter Creek. By a clever ruse Mrs. Story prevents the discovery of Warrington and Selden, who have taken refuge in her log-house to escape the pursuit of Sheriff Munroe's posse. Then follows a graphic description of the secret cave built by the widow and her children as a protection against Indians or "Yorkers." Thompson later makes use of this cave as a hiding-place for a party pursued by Indians in a manner that shows his familiarity with *The Last of the Mohicans*.

The stirring account of how Warrington, with six of his Green Mountain Boys, attacked and took possession of Colonel Reed's settlement on Otter Creek contains more fiction than fact. Perhaps Ethan Allen is kept out of this farcical skirmish to preserve his dignity as well as not to distract attention from the minor heroes, Warrington and Selden. Moreover, since Thompson requires only six Green Mountain Boys to overcome the stubborn resistance of McIntosh, it seems hardly credible that Ethan Allen found sixty men insufficient; but such is the fact.[2] Nor would one suspect from the novelist's account that the attacking party, after overcoming the Scotchmen, burned down their houses, destroyed

[1] In *The Green Mountain Boys*, on p. 42, occurs the following footnote: "An old settler, to whom Mrs. Story and her cave were personally known, described her to the author as 'a busting great woman, who could cut off a two foot log as quick as any man in the settlement.'" From sources of this kind Thompson obtained much of his material. See p. 48.

[2] R. Robinson, *Vermont*, pp. 78, 79.

their corn, and wrecked their grist-mill. The omission of details of this sort is not important, but it is pertinent to note the kind of evidence that never gets into historical fiction when written by a partisan. Our main concern, however, is with the story.

Warrington and Sherwood are rival suitors for the hand of Alma Hendee. The heroine's father, a retired British major who served under Wolfe in Canada, has taken out a York patent, through the agency of Sherwood, on a piece of land situated on the eastern shore of Lake Champlain near Crown Point. Although Warrington has previously acquired this property under a Hampshire patent, he keeps this fact a secret from the Hendees because of his interest in Alma. The major has arranged for the marriage of his daughter to Sherwood, who is the girl's cousin. Alma at first consents to her father's proposal, realizing that he is under deep financial obligations to Sherwood. But she secretly admires Warrington.

It is at Captain Hendee's house, during a visit of Warrington, that Ethan Allen first appears on the scene. In the guise of a casual stranger who has come to break the news of the battle of Lexington, he is there really to sound the views of Captain Hendee, and, if possible, to enlist him on the side of the colonists in the impending struggle with Great Britain. At this juncture Sergeant Darrow, a tool of Sherwood's, arrives with ten armed men to seize Warrington. Immediately upon entering, Darrow recognizes the stranger as Ethan Allen. His attempt to capture this Robin Hood of the Green Mountains is frustrated when the latter, feigning drunkenness, is allowed to seek a night's lodging in the barn,

from which he escapes[1] accompanied by Warrington. The situation, though bordering on sheer farce, is extremely well handled.

Although our author never loses sight of Sherwood, he keeps him in the background, as he does the Hendees, while he devotes several chapters to a description of the secret preparations made by Colonel Allen to surprise the British garrison at Ticonderoga, and of the actual capture of the fort. Accordingly, we shall interrupt the main story long enough to take account of what happens in the interim. The actual historical facts are too well known to need retelling here. Following the battle of Lexington both Allen and Benedict Arnold set out to capture Fort Ticonderoga. Allen and his men arrived first. Arnold, despite his commission from the Massachusetts Committee of Safety, yields the leadership to Allen in obedience to the will of the Green Mountain Boys. Early in the morning of May 10, while it was still dark and before all of his men had crossed the lake, Allen rushed into the fort, and found himself facing the loaded musket of a roused sentry. What follows must be told in the melodramatic style of the original.

> But the gun missed fire. The life of the daring leader was safe, and the garrison slept on, unalarmed, and unconscious of their danger. Leaping forward like the bounding tiger on his victim, Allen followed up the retreating soldier so hotly that, with all the speed which fear could lend him, he could scarcely keep clear of the rapidly whirling sword of his fiery pursuer, till he gained the interior of the fortress; when he gave a loud screech of alarm, and, making a desperate leap for a bomb proof disappeared within its recesses. Meanwhile the rushing column of troops came sweeping like a whirlwind through the gate; when fairly gaining the parade ground in

[1] This incident is based on an actual occurrence. See Sparks, *Ethan Allen*, p. 262.

front of the barracks, they gave three cheers which made the old walls tremble with the deafening reverberations, and caused the slumbering garrison to start from their beds in wild dismay at the unwonted sound. Scarcely had the last huzza escaped the lips of the men and their leader . . . before the latter was rapidly threading his way through flying sentries and half-dressed officers, towards the quarters of the commandant of the fortress. Pausing an instant on his way, to chastise a dastard sentinel whom he caught making a pass at one of our officers with his bayonet, and whom, with one blow with the flat of his sword, he sent reeling to the earth with the cry of mercy on his lips, the daring leader bounded up the stairway leading to the commandant's room, and thundering at the door, called loudly to that officer to come forth. Captain La Place, who had just leaped from his bed, on hearing the tumult below, soon made his appearance with his clothes in his hand, but suddenly recoiling a step, he stood gazing in mute amazement at the stern and threatening air, and the powerful and commanding figure of the man before him.

"I come, sir, to demand the immediate surrender of this fortress!" sternly said Allen, to the astonished commander.

"By what authority do you make this bold demand of His Majesty's fort, sir?" said the other, almost distrusting his senses.

"By what authority?" thundered Allen, "I demand it, sir, in the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress!"

"The Continental Congress!" stammered the hesitating officer, "I know of no right — I don't acknowledge it, sir —"

"But you will soon acknowledge it, sir," fiercely interrupted the impatient leader. "And hesitate to obey me one instant longer, and by the eternal heavens! I will sacrifice every man in your fort! — beginning the work, sir," he added, whirling his sword furiously over the head of the other, and bringing the murderous blade at every glittering circle it made in the air nearer and nearer the head of its threatened victim, "beginning the work, sir, by sending your own head dancing across this floor!"

"I yield, I yield!" cried the shrinking commandant.

"Down! down, then, instantly!" exclaimed Allen, "and communicate the surrender to your men while any of them are left alive to hear it." [1]

Meanwhile Sherwood, in his efforts to win Miss Hendee, succeeds at least in prejudicing her father against Warrington. But Alma, during a visit to her aunt, Mrs. Story, again meets Warrington, to whom she now becomes engaged. After the capture of Ticonderoga, Warrington is promoted to the rank of major in the Continental Army, and this gives him a further advantage over his Tory rival. The latter, however, bribes a tinker to appear at Captain Hendee's house and casually to relate a false story to the effect that Warrington is a married man who has deserted his wife. He thus succeeds in causing Alma to break her relations with Warrington. There is now a lapse of two years in the action of the story. Then Alma receives a letter from the tinker, in which he confesses his falsehood. Meanwhile Sherwood's father dies in Albany, leaving most of his estate to Captain Hendee. Before the provisions of the will become known, however, Sherwood again attempts to force Alma to marry him.

With the arrival of General Burgoyne's army at the head of Lake Champlain, events succeed each other with such rapidity and complication that only a very condensed summary can be given. The villain, with a band of local Tories, enlists with Burgoyne. The Hendees are forced to flee. They are captured in their flight, however, by Darrow. Alma is again confronted by Sherwood, who makes a final attempt, but in vain, to force her into a hasty marriage. Of course the Tories

[1] Cf. Ethan Allen's *Narrative*, pp. 16, 17.

are suddenly attacked by a party of valiant Green Mountain Boys, and the captives are released. The captain and his daughter are now taken to the widow Story's cabin, where they are joined by Selden and others. Here they are attacked by some of Burgoyne's Indians, who finally set fire to the cabin. The besieged party now seeks refuge in the secret cave which has been previously mentioned. The attack on the cave is directed by Sherwood and Darrow, and it appears at first as if it would succeed. But at the very moment when the Indians are all assembled near the main entrance, ready to batter their way in, Selden, from a safe vantage, blows up the cave and the Indians are killed. Thus the besieged party escapes. Darrow falls into their hands, but Sherwood, who gets away in the confusion of the moment, flees to Canada. Lieutenant Selden is identified as the supposedly lost son of Captain Hendee. Needless to add, Warrington, now a colonel, marries Alma Hendee. Thus the story ends.

The scene of the besieging and blowing-up of the cave is one of the most thrilling in the book. The following passage is a fair specimen of the author's method.

. . . But while the foe-trampled earth was jarring to the hideous tumult above, the silence of death prevailed through the hushed vaults beneath. The agitated mother was breathing hurried ejaculations over her clasped children. And near her might be seen the huddling forms of her shuddering female companions, with their fair hands tightly compressed over both ears and eyes, as if to shut out from their recoiling senses the noise of the now momentarily expected explosion; while the men in the dark passage beyond, stood motionless and silent, listening in the attitude of intensely excited expectation for the awful denouement. Selden . . . still held the torch suspended in his extended hand over the train, now lowering the point of the low flickering brand nearly to a

contact with the powder, at some indication of the expected descent, and now hastily withdrawing it, as other and less decisive sounds reached his ear. His hesitation, however, was soon ended; at that instant, a loud yell at the western entrance, and the sounds of thickly-trampling feet that followed, told him that the enemy had forced the barrier at the end of that passage, and were rushing into the room . . . At this critical instant, and before the mingled war-cry of the savage and Tory had died away in the echoeing vaults beyond him, the young leader applied the brand to the fuse, and rapidly retreated along the passage toward his friends. . . . With the low, hissing sound of the slowly burning match, came a cry of horror from the scrambling foe, over whose mind, now for the first time, seemed to flash the dreadful truth. But too late. The next instant, with a concussion that almost threw Selden and his companions from their feet, the earth yawned and opened along the passage overhead nearly to the spot where they stood; when through the long vibrating chasm, was displayed to their appalled vision, the broad space of tree-covered earth over and around the room beyond, leaping, in disrupturing masses, into the air, along with the diverging column of fiercely shooting smoke and flame, in which there were seen, commingling with rocks, earth, and the limbs and trunks of uprooted and swiftly revolving trees, a score of human forms, wildly throwing out their arms, as if for aid, and distending their mouths with unheard screeches, as, with blackened and distorted features, and dissevering limbs, they were borne upwards with amazing force in the flaming mass to the heavens. . . . A momentary silence ensued; when the returning shower of ruins came thundering to the earth; after which, all again relapsed into a death-like and unbroken silence.

Both in matter and in style *The Green Mountain Boys* is a decidedly Cooperesque romance. Its incidents are based on actual occurrences in the early history of Vermont, but their prototypes may readily be found in *The Spy, The Pioneers*, and *The Last of the Mohicans*. It did

not set a new fashion in historical fiction, nor did it introduce fresh material. In 1840 there was nothing new in an attack of Indians on a log cabin, or in their besieging a secret cave; this kind of material Cooper had popularized a decade earlier. Among other devices, that of having a boy of good family abducted or in some mysterious way separated from his parents, of having him adopted and brought up by Indians or hunters, of having him appear on the scene of the story under an assumed name, and of having his identity disclosed at the end (as in the case of Edwards and Selden) shows the author's indebtedness to *The Pioneers*. Many more examples might be given, were it necessary to prove the obvious. Thompson is clearly an imitator of Cooper, but no more so than were Simms, Kennedy, and Bird.[1] By 1840, indeed, the essential matter of the Revolution and the frontier, the former as originally presented in *The Spy* (1821), and the latter in *The Pioneers* (1823) and *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), had become the common property of a whole school of Cooper's imitators. Thus Thompson dealt with the Revolution in Vermont, Simms in South Carolina, and Kennedy in Maryland.

In manner, too, *The Green Mountain Boys* is decidedly Cooperesque. To appreciate this fact it is only necessary to read a few pages at random from almost any part of the book. We find a treatment of Revolutionary material similar to Cooper's, the same portrayal of frontier types, the same narration of adventure, descrip-

[1] See *The Partisan*, *Horse Shoe Robinson*, and *Nick of the Woods*. These romances appeared before 1840, and there were many others. They are all so much alike in form and substance that Dr. Van Doren suggests topographical arrangement as the proper mode of classification. "Were the names of the . . . authors transposed it would be noticed, if at all, only by experts" (*The American Novel*, p. 54).

tion of forest and lake, characterization of heroes and villains, and delineation of coy maidens sought after by conventional lovers. The narrative and descriptive passages are on the whole excellent; the characterization is uniformly weak. Types of character are more strongly contrasted than in Cooper (for example, Sherwood and Warrington); but this is only a difference in degree. Development of character there is not. Sherwood reveals no progressive moral deterioration; he merely continues his machinations against Vermonters in general and Warrington in particular until he is foiled and is forced to leave the country. Warrington cannot be said to develop, for he merely engages in one exploit after another until he attains his object. Alma Hendee remains the same ineffectual angel from beginning to end. Even Ethan Allen, as we see him in the story, reminds us pretty much of a typical hero in melodrama. In brief, the characters are conventional. "Such a charge," says Professor Lounsbury in his defence of Cooper, "can be admitted without seriously disparaging the value of his work. In the kind of fiction to which his writings belong, the persons are necessarily so subordinate to the events that nearly all novelists of this class have been subjected to this same criticism."

It is in the matter of language that one finds the most vulnerable point of the novel. Thompson, despite his slowness of composition, never attained real dignity of style, rarely showed a proper control of diction, and indeed occasionally violated even the fundamental rules of sentence structure. In passage after passage he betrays the inadequacy of his early training in the use of language. Two sentences taken at random from *The Green Mountain Boys* will suffice to show the author's verbal inexactitude and his loose sentence structure.

The first thought of Neshobee, on making this discovery, was to secure a retreat from this dangerous vicinity to the sentinel, though he was wholly at a loss what course he should now take to find those to whom he had been dispatched for succor.

It was a soft and balmy evening, in that loveliest of all months of the year in our northern clime, delightful June, when two ladies were seen issuing from the Hendee cottage, to wander abroad, to enjoy the beauties of the evening, and hold in the solitudes of the fields that confidential communion on the subjects of mutual concern, which is ever interesting to friends, who have just met after a long separation.

If one were not aware that Thompson wrote slowly, one would never discover it from his style or his language. The fastidious reader who is irritated by Cooper's slovenliness can hardly be expected to read *The Green Mountain Boys.*

However much Thompson may resemble Cooper in the matter and manner of his historical fiction, he differs from him in many respects. In the first place he was far more biased than Cooper in his attitude toward the British — perhaps because he did not have a Loyalist wife. At any rate, the Tories as he represents them are usually knaves or fools. He takes care to make Sherwood a Tory as well as a Yorker. General Burgoyne is represented as cruel and haughty. In contrast with their British foes, Ethan Allen and Warrington are veritable paragons of courage and chivalry.

Another difference is that Thompson does not idealize the Indian. The attack on Mrs. Story's cabin is the work of cunning savages. The Indians as a race are cruel, treacherous, lazy, and dirty. Exceptions there are, like Captain Hendee's servant. But even the faithful Neshobee is not poeticized; he is no spiritual kin of Chingach-

gook. "Our faithful Neshobee," the captain remarks to his daughter, "will also stick by us, and work as much as an Indian will ever work, for you know the Indians are a lazy race, and we must make allowance for him." Still, Neshobee is not an original creation. He owes his existence to the Leatherstocking Tales.

In still another respect our author differs from Cooper. He has a sly sense of humor. Although Ethan Allen breaks forth into hearty laughter at a practical joke or a coarse witticism, it is Pete Jones, the droll Yankee backwoodsman, who speaks for the author himself. Pete Jones is perhaps the most convincing character in the book, because he is drawn to the life, simple, spontaneous, and natural. He is the comic character of the novel, but he is something better than that: he is absolutely original, unique in American fiction. That, perhaps, is a doubtful distinction, since the author had little or no competition in depicting this particular type; but nevertheless it is a distinction. There is more sly wit and hearty fun in *The Green Mountain Boys* than in most other historical novels, more than in all the Leatherstocking Tales put together.

Finally, whatever may be the defects of this "classic of Vermont," it is certainly a stirring tale of adventure. Its narrative power cannot be denied. No other book written by Thompson has approached it in popularity (especially among boys), and popularity is not to be despised. Yet, although it marks an advance over *May Martin*, its historical interest and patriotic appeal, rather than superior workmanship, are responsible for the wider reading it obtained. The author himself did not regard *The Green Mountain Boys* as his best work. *Locke Amsden* is unquestionably better. But it is for *The Green*

Mountain Boys that Thompson will be remembered — if he is remembered at all. The changing taste of the present age is creating a new and entirely different juvenile literature. This literature is concerned with adventures in which the new scientific inventions — the aeroplane, the submarine, wireless, and radio — are utilized. Historical fiction is not exactly in vogue at present. But there will always be persons who are interested in the Revolution and the frontier (that period can never be duplicated in American history), and among such readers *The Green Mountain Boys* will continue to find its audience.

CHAPTER V

LOCKE AMSDEN

IN many respects *Locke Amsden* is Thompson's most significant book. At the time of its publication it was regarded as the first popular novel advocating improvement in the American system of common schools. To-day it is interesting to the historian of education because of the truthful picture it gives of Vermont district schools in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. But it is also of interest to the student of American literature, partly for its intrinsic literary value (although it is not a classic), partly for its significance as a forerunner of *The Hoosier Schoolmaster* and other such books, and partly for its autobiographical importance. It gives a more truthful picture of frontier life than either *May Martin* or *The Green Mountain Boys;* it is also a better-written book.

A favorable contemporary criticism of *Locke Amsden* appeared in the *North American Review* for January, 1848. It is interesting to observe the emphasis placed upon educational reform in this review.

> It is the first novel that we have seen, the main purpose of which is to advocate and improve the American school system. The writer has performed his work with discretion, good sense, and some skill and humor in the delineation of character. He does not dive among the transcendental ideas to find a new basis for elementary education, but represents children and facts as they actually exist, and proceeds to point out the best modes of improving the people's colleges. As nineteen out of twenty in our land receive in the common

schools all the instruction which they ever obtain, it is of measureless importance that the schools should be constantly watched, and the proper mode of managing them be generally understood. Locke Amsden comes forward as a judicious and popular school reform, and discourses with considerable ability about school-houses, ventilation, school-books, school-committees, and competent teachers, as well as the best modes of instruction and government. These topics form the main trunk of the book, round which the author has quite prettily entwined the tendrils of a love story. While book-learning has its place of honor assigned it, self-culture and habits of reflection not learned from books are strongly inculcated. Captain Bill Bunker is the character introduced to illustrate these qualities. Locke Amsden is the schoolmaster, who shows both sources of knowledge united, and his character is well sustained throughout, though it is less original than that of Bunker. His examination as candidate for the situation of teacher of a country district school is laughable enough, and shows with ludicrous fidelity what a farce is acted over in this respect, every season, in most of our villages and smaller towns. . . .

With regard to style, the work is an improvement on May Martin. The language is clear and strong, though there are a few sentences which might be remodelled to advantage. The chief aim of the book is worthy of all praise. It recognizes that central principle in the Russian system, "As is the teacher, so is the school"; and its main purpose is to illustrate the doctrine, that competent teachers cannot have bad schools, incompetent teachers cannot have good ones. . . . We know of few books on this all-important subject which can be read with more profit by all classes than Locke Amsden, revealing, as it does, the defective systems of instruction that are in use, and suggesting the proper remedy for existing evils.

The main interest of *Locke Amsden* for us, however, lies in its autobiographical significance. Locke Amsden, as we have already said, is Daniel P. Thompson, and it would be interesting to know exactly the source of this appellation. It is almost certain that the novelist had

in mind the philosopher Locke,[1] but whence he derived Amsden, unless from the Vermont village of that name, is a matter of speculation. If he used Locke as a symbol of scholarship, may he not have employed Amsden to identify this particular scholar with Vermont? At any rate, we recognize Locke as young Thompson, and we can readily connect much of the scenery, incident, and atmosphere of the book with his early life. Many of the incidents, to be sure, are purely fictitious. Nevertheless, one can separate fact from fiction in some cases, as, for example, in the following description of his boyhood home on the Onion River. Here one can recognize, in Mr. Amsden and Ben, the father and younger brother of the novelist.

It was near the middle of the day, in that part of the spring season when the rough and chill features of winter are becoming so equally blended with the soft and mild ones of summer upon the face of nature, that we feel at a loss in deciding whether the characteristics of the one or the other most prevail. The hills were mostly bare, but their appearance was not that of summer; and the tempted eye turned away unsatisfied from the cheerless prospect which their dreary and frost-blackened sides presented. The levels, on the other hand, were still covered with snow; and yet their aspect was not that of winter. Clumps of willows, scattered along the hedges, or around the waste-places of the meadows, were white with starting buds or blossoms of spring . . . the tops of the furrows, peering through the dissolving snows, were beginning to streak, with long, faint, dotted lines, the self disclosing plough-fields. The cattle were lazily ruminating in the barn-yard, occasionally lowing and casting a wistful glance at the bare hills around, but without offering to move towards them, as if they thought that the prospects there

[1] "Your son bears the name of a great and learned man. . . . Do you intend he shall try to rival his namesake in knowledge and fame?" (*Locke Amsden*, p. 15.)

were hardly sufficient to induce them yet to leave their winter quarters. The earth-loving sheep, however, had broken from their fold, and, having reached the borders of the hills by some partially trod path, were busily nibbling at the roots of the shriveled herbage, unheedful of the bleating cries of their feebler companions, that they had left stuck in the treacherous snow-drifts, encountered in their migrations from one bare patch to another.

The owner of the farming establishment, in reference to which we have been speaking, was in the door-yard, engaged in splitting and piling up his yearly stock of fire-wood. He was a man of about forty, not of a very intellectual countenance, indeed, but of a stout, hardy, and well-made frame, which showed to advantage in the handsome and appropriate long, striped, woollen frock, in which he was plying himself with the moderate and easy motions which are, perhaps, peculiar to men of great physical power. A rugged and resolute-looking boy, of perhaps a dozen years of age, having thrown himself upon one knee before a small pile of prepared wood, lying near the kitchen door for immediate use, and having heaped the clefts into one arm till they reached to his chin, as if in whim to see how much he could carry in, was now engaged in trying, with a capricious, bravado-like air, to balance an additional stick on his head, by way of increasing his already enormous load.

Whether the incidents that follow are fact or fiction is hard to say, but the accompanying description of Locke Amsden is genuine enough. The scene is laid in the sugar-orchard on the Thompson farm into which Mr. Amsden and a Colonel Maverick have just entered.

On arriving within a rod or two of the spot, he [Colonel Maverick] paused, and looked around for the one in superintendence; when his eye fell on the person of a boy of about sixteen, lying on some straw at the mouth of the shantee, which opened towards the row of boiling kettles in front. The lad had a ciphering slate, and a large, old, cover-worn volume spread before him; and upon this he was so absorb-

ingly engaged, that neither the sight or sound of his approaching visitor appeared to make the least impression on his senses. Hesitating to disturb one evidently so little expecting it, the stranger stood a moment . . . glancing with an air of interest and surprised curiosity at the picturesque attitude, shapely limbs, and finely turned head of the boy; who, with bosom thrown open, hat cast aside, the fingers of one hand twisted in his curly raven hair, and those of the other grasping the nimbly-plying pencil, was thus engaged in an employment so little looked for by the other on a common farm, and least of all in the woods . . . the next moment, our little student of the woods leaped suddenly upon his feet, and, with the exulting shout of Archimedes of old, exclaimed aloud, "I have done it! I have done it!" adding, as he turned back and shook his fist at the book, "now, old Pike, just show me another sum that I can't do, will you? you are conquered, sir!"

In the light of such knowledge as we have of Thompson's boyhood, the incident cited above, even if fictitious, is so strikingly characteristic as to possess genuine biographical interest. The recollection of a man of fifty-two is, to be sure, hardly a trustworthy source of exact information; but it is never unimportant to the biographer or to the reader whose concern is not with chronology alone. Obviously, what is remembered of youth in middle life must be of some importance to the individual, and, consequently, must reveal something of his character. The difficulty in the case of *Locke Amsden*, however, is that we are dealing with a novel rather than with a memoir. The novelist must of course introduce fictitious elements to make a story. Our problem is, therefore, to disentangle these elements, so far as we can, from the network of fact. Admittedly this cannot be done with sufficient exactness to meet the requirement of strict biographical authenticity; for this very reason, we attempt to make the distinction here rather than in

the biography proper. In order to avoid misunderstanding we shall designate major incidents and characters as fictitious, probable, or improbable,[1] that is, as they appear in the light of our knowledge of Thompson; minor episodes and characters we shall, for the most part, silently omit. But it must never be forgotten that *Locke Amsden*, however significant in a biographical sense, was written primarily as a novel. The author merely drew from his early pedagogical and practical experience such material as he needed for a didactic fiction.

About a month after Colonel Maverick and his daughter stopped at the Amsden farm, Locke received from Mary Maverick a box filled with books. The collection consisted of textbooks on arithmetic (with a set of mathematical instruments), a "standard work" on natural philosophy, and another on astronomy, as well as separate treatises upon geology, mineralogy, and chemistry.[2] Perhaps the Mavericks were simply creations of the novelist's imagination,[3] though there is a bare possibility that he may have received books from the clergyman[4] to whose residence he went in 1815 for instruction. Far more important is the certainty that Thompson is telling us the true story of his own early struggles for an education. We see, in Locke Amsden's devotion to study, his application to self-imposed intel-

[1] Incidents that are positively verifiable are given in chapter I.

[2] *Locke Amsden*, p. 28.

[3] There is a remote possibility that Thompson may have had his father-in-law and wife in mind when he evolved the characters of Colonel Maverick and his daughter, but it is then certain that the circumstances in which he places them are fictitious. Even if the novelist had anyone else in mind, it is clear from the known facts of his life that many of the incidents described are not autobiographical.

[4] See chapter I, p. 21, and Duyckinck, i, 944.

lectual tasks, and his acquisition of sound mental habits, a reminiscent account of the growth of the novelist's mind and character. Locke's accidental acquaintance with an old surveyor who taught him trigonometry is simply another illustration of the type of highly probable incident, the essential truth of which we cannot doubt in view of the boy's ambition. Many other incidents of a similar nature might be cited. But the account which follows, of Locke's attendance at the district school, his meeting with Seaver, his year at the academy, and so forth, has in chapter I already been drained of essential fact.

Locke now applies for a position as teacher in the district school of a small village, known from its partial enclosure by curving mountains as the Horn-of-the-Moon. His meeting with Captain Bill Bunker constitutes one of the most interesting scenes in the book, for this illiterate, practical thinker (doubtless drawn from the life, though exaggerated for effect) cross-examines the young student in a manner all his own.

[Bunker.] "Now for the main question — do you know anything?"

"I trust so, sir," said Locke, hardly knowing yet what to think of the man, "I trust so. Here is a certificate from my late preceptor — will you hear it read?"

"No," replied the other, "I should place no dependence on anything of that sort. Every one who goes to an academy gets a certificate, if he wants one, I have noticed; while not one in three, who go there, are fit for teachers." . . .

"I offered the paper only to show my acquirements — that I understood all the sciences taught in the common schools."

"O, I presume you have gone over enough of what is put down in the books," resumed the other. "But how can I tell, from your recommendation, whether you can think for your-

self, independent of your books; and what is more for a teacher, whether you can teach others to think for themselves? . . . Now, the main object of education should be, in my opinion, to teach men to think, and not depend upon books for everything to be known. Now, here is the great book of nature open before us, full of every kind of knowledge for those who can think. Then, don't you see the advantage which a man who can read that has over one who can only read the books of men, which are so liable to contain errors?"

"I certainly agree with you in much you have said, sir; but if you intend to say that book learning, as you would term it, is useless, I must wholly dissent," observed Locke.

"I don't say or think so," said Bunker. "No it gives one great advantages in knowing what others in different parts of the world have found out, and may be, if rightly used and understood, a great help in thinking and making discoveries for himself. No, I don't think so of learning; for I am half bothered to death for the want of it myself. . . . And all I want of you is, to find out whether you have it; and, if so, whether it has made you a good thinker, and one who can teach others to be so, as well as to teach them the books."

"Very well, sir," responded the other, "I am quite willing you should satisfy yourself, and in your own way."

"I will," replied Bunker. "And first, let us see how you stand in arithmetic. What will twenty-seven multiplied by twenty-three produce? Don't look round for a slate or paper, but work it out in your head, as I do all my reckoning."

This sum, as soon as the answer was given by the one and pronounced correct by the other, was followed by more questions in each of the other fundamental rules of the science under consideration. Then came questions requiring, first, the aid of two of these rules, then three, then all, each question being more difficult and complex, till the whole groundwork of common arithmetic was passed over by the questioner; in all of which he showed himself a proficient in mental arithmetic to a degree that perfectly astonished our hero, who, though he was, from his former habit of working sums in his head while at work, uncommonly ready at this exercise, was yet often put to his best powers in furnishing answers as soon as they were obtained by the proposer.

The examiner then asked a number of practical questions on the subject of geography and of "philosophy," that is, natural philosophy, or physics. He wisely omitted "reading, writing, grammar, etc.," for he knew nothing about them himself. Satisfied with Locke Amsden's proficiency in everything "except government, about which we will hope for the best, and run the risk," Captain Bunker immediately appointed Locke as the new teacher for the district school at the Horn-of-the-Moon.

Not the least interesting feature of *Locke Amsden* is the author's occasional digression from the narrative to discuss the existing state of education. Because of his renewed contact with the school system as secretary of the State Education Society, Thompson writes with his eye on the object. His comment reflects the thinking of an independent mind, but it is never profound. Of contemporary significance to educators, the following remarks are to-day chiefly valuable for their quality of self-revelation. Moreover, they are symptomatic of advancing age; they are characteristic of the man of middle life who lives in the past.

> This may be, and doubtless is, a reading age; but with all its advantages, we see not what claim it has to be called a thinking age. The cause of this may, in some measure, perhaps, be attributable to the prevailing utilitarian spirit of the times, which is more likely to lead only to the lighter investigations required in turning to account what is already known in science, than to laborious thinking, and those profound researches by which the scholars of past times were accustomed to push their way in the field of discovery; and which, by inviting and turning, through superior inducement, the greater proportion of the talents of the day into one channel, may have a tendency to circumscribe, impede, and

weaken the operations of mind, and unfit it for the free, bold, and vigorous action which ever characterizes a thinking age. . . .

Locke Amsden's experiences as a district schoolteacher, like those of his student days, give us a truthful picture of the novelist's own development. Thompson in writing his memoir for the Duyckinck *Cyclopedia* (1855) significantly refers to this period in the following words: "The winter he employed in studying human nature and adding to his means while boarding round as the schoolmaster of one of the wild districts of the country. A good preparation he subsequently found it for novel writing." He studied human nature! Most of his characters are drawn from the life. The highly original Captain Bill Bunker had a prototype in the illiterate but self-educated backwoodsman whose father had pitched a cabin "at the very outskirts of civilization, on one of the great rivers of Canada, where schools were wholly out of the question. . . ." From men and women whom he met at this period he also created such characters as Dr. Lincoln, Mr. Blake, Manlius C. W. Tilden, Professor of Elegant Literature, the Carters, the editor of *The Blazing Star*, and others. Consequently each one of these characters, however typical of the social, professional, or business life of a frontier community, is a concrete individual rather than a mere type. Dr. Lincoln is not just another country doctor, he is a man of pronounced characteristics; Mr. Blake is not simply a typical applicant for a position in the district school imposing on the ignorance of self-important village trustees, he is too distinctively a pretentious ass to be other than an individual; Professor Manlius C. W. Tilden is more polished than Blake, and perhaps less

ignorant, but he is equally asinine in his own way; the Carters, mother and daughters, on the other hand, are less concretely drawn than any other characters in the book, except perhaps the Mavericks, who figure only at the beginning and near the end of the story. As for the communities themselves, if the Horn-of-the-Moon, Mill-Town Emporium, and Cartersville are not named on any map of Vermont, they are none the less real because their names are disguised. In the Horn-of-the-Moon, incidentally, Thompson found traces of the New England witchcraft delusion still remaining in his day.[1]

The least valuable part of *Locke Amsden*, from our point of view, is the conventional love-story which the novelist has artfully introduced to hold the reader's attention. Much of that love-story is pure fiction — perhaps all. The melodramatic rescue of Mary Maverick from the burning Carter house by Bill Bunker and the frantic lover is an old trick that could appeal only to the credulous reader of romance. The heroine is left in the house, and while her father and Locke are seeking her in the flames she suddenly appears on the roof, which is ready to fall. The rescue itself is old-fashioned melodrama: while Bunker holds the ladder in the enveloping flames, and the firemen throw a drenching column of water on him, Locke carries the prostrate girl down to safety. But the love-story, however conventional, served the author's purpose, which was, as we suggested, to meet the demand of novel-readers as well as to interest educators. And in this object he succeeded better than contemporary writers who issued treatises on education too dull to gain the attention of the masses. How well he succeeded is specifically shown

[1] *Locke Amsden*, p. 100.

by the fact that by 1892 nine editions of *Locke Amsden* had been published.

It is hardly necessary to repeat that *Locke Amsden* is not a classic. To the present generation, indeed, the book is virtually unknown. But in its day, as we have pointed out, it was very favorably noticed in the educational and secular press, and doubtless exerted considerable influence on teachers and parents. Because of its hold upon popular interest it was deemed sufficiently important by Hubert M. Skinner to be utilized in compiling *The Schoolmaster in Literature* (1892). This anthology contained selections from the writings of Ascham, Molière, Rousseau, Goethe, Pestalozzi, Brontë, Dickens, and so forth, and excerpts from *The Hoosier Schoolmaster* and *Locke Amsden*. The introduction was written by Edward Eggleston. The editor, in his foreword to *The School of the Horn-in-the-Moon* and *The Examination at Mill-Town Emporium*, attributes the popularity of *Locke Amsden* largely to its subject-matter and "to the high esteem in which its author was held as an eminent citizen of spotless fame," though he admits that the style was pleasing and creditable. It is only fair to add that Thompson's reputation as a "citizen of spotless fame" could never have made an inferior book on an important subject popular, or have ensured for it perpetuity. The credit belongs to Thompson as a writer who skilfully blended romance with instruction.

Although *Locke Amsden* bore no causative relation to *The Hoosier Schoolmaster* (1871), it was a forerunner in the sense that our author described local conditions somewhat realistically, drawing almost entirely from his own experience, and employing the dialect of his own region. It is not, however, a distinctively dialect novel.

Moreover, Edward Eggleston tells us he was directly influenced by reading Taine's *Art in the Netherlands*, as a result of which he applied the French critic's thesis that the artist of originality will work courageously with the materials he finds in his own environment. On the other hand, familiar as Eggleston certainly was with the literature of New England, it is not improbable that he had read *Locke Amsden* before 1871.[1] In this connection the following passages are interesting, though far from conclusive.

> Before the appearance of this story [*The Hoosier Schoolmaster*], the New England folk-speech had long been employed for various literary purposes, it is true; and after its use by Lowell, it had acquired a standing that made it the classic *lingua rustica* of the United States.[2]

And speaking of Westerners,

> It used to be a matter of no little jealousy with us, I remember, that the manners, customs, thoughts, and feelings of New England country people filled so large a place in books, while our life, not less interesting, not less romantic, and certainly not less filled with humorous and grotesque material, had no place in literature.[3]

In *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*, Eggleston of course brought a new dialect into literature, but aside from that, and from the superiority of his method, the subject-matter is strangely like that of *Locke Amsden*. In each case the hero is a youthful, inexperienced schoolmaster, who is appointed teacher of a poor district school, by a trustee whose two sons are notorious for their misbehavior to pedagogues. In each case the teacher makes it

[1] His familiarity with *Locke Amsden* in 1892 is shown in *The Schoolmaster in Literature*.

[2] *The Hoosier Schoolmaster* (Preface to the Library Edition, 1892), p. 6.

[3] Quoted in *The American Novel*, p. 130.

a point to win the friendship of the sons, and solves the problem of discipline through sheer grit and mental alertness. In each case the hero is falsely accused by sly enemies, clears himself, regains his prestige in the frontier community, and marries the heroine, a girl who has been loyal to him. These similarities may be purely accidental or due to the limited range of subject-matter. But they suggest a possible influence.

Locke Amsden carries the story of Thompson's early career to the point of his graduation from college. In view of the superiority of this book over his previous novels, it is perhaps unfortunate that the author did not treat other phases of education, or at least continue his semi-autobiographic story through the years subsequent to his leaving Middlebury. The former alternative was suggested to him by Jared Sparks, who wrote: "You have entered on a broad subject, affording many other fertile topics for development and illustration by a pen like yours; I hope you will keep it in motion." But Thompson did not further develop and illustrate this subject; instead, he returned to an earlier and favorite theme — the Revolutionary history of Vermont. His next book, indeed, was virtually a supplement to *The Green Mountain Boys*.

CHAPTER VI

LATER NOVELS

THE year 1851 is a significant milestone in the history of American fiction, for it marks the passing of Fenimore Cooper and, with his passing, the rapid decline of his school, the publication of *Moby Dick*, and, following the appearance of *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), the emergence of Hawthorne as the dominant American novelist. Van Doren has pointed out that the limits of Cooper's life mark almost exactly the first large period of our fiction: Neal, Thompson, Paulding, Kennedy, Simms, and Melville all outlived him, "but not, as a current fashion, the type of romance which flourished under Cooper." [1] By 1851, then, the Cooperesque tales of adventure were no longer in vogue; they were being supplanted by the more artistic type of fiction represented in *The Scarlet Letter*. Hawthorne, indeed, was the first real master of literary technique to essay the novel; and from his time, the older tales of adventure have seemed crude and antiquated. It is only fair to add, however, that the popularity of Cooper's romances and those of his immediate school, contemporaneous with the unprecedented popularity of Scott, had done much to bring the novel into good repute in America.

In criticizing the work of Thompson, therefore, it is well to remember the circumstances under which he wrote. In 1839 he had seized upon the literary form al-

[1] *The American Novel*, p. 51.

MONTPELIER IN 1860

From the earliest-known photograph

ready popularized by Scott and Cooper; and this type of romance he had adapted for a specific purpose, shaping the Ethan Allen saga into permanent literary form at the psychological time. Had Thompson written twenty or thirty years later he could not have rendered this unique service to Vermont, partly because he would then have been compelled to rely entirely upon a nebulous tradition, and partly because he would have encountered a waning popular interest in this kind of historical fiction. And although in 1851 he returned to his favorite theme in *The Rangers*, it is significant that this book did not repeat the success of *The Green Mountain Boys*.

So far as the two books are historical they are definitely related to each other; that is, the later novel is really a supplement to the earlier one. On beginning *The Green Mountain Boys*, our author tells us, he had planned to include the battle of Bennington and other historic events, but finding, as he proceeded, that the inclusion of this material would destroy the unity of his general design, he set it aside for a separate work.[1] That he anticipated a less enthusiastic reception for *The Rangers* than his earlier novel had received, is evident from the following:

> That work [*The Rangers*], after an interval of ten years . . . is now presented to the public, and with the single remark, that if it is made to possess less interest, as a mere tale, than its predecessor, the excuse must be found in the author's greater anxiety to give a true historic version of the interesting and important events he has undertaken to illustrate.[2]

The Rangers or The Tory's Daughter, like its predecessor, has several heroes, none of whom, however, emerges

[1] See foreword to *The Rangers*, opposite page 1. [2] *Ibid.*

so brilliantly as did Ethan Allen. The leading historical figures who appear in the novel are Generals Burgoyne and Riedesel on the British side, and on the American, Ira Allen, General Stark, and Colonel Seth Warner; but the real hero of the story itself is Harry Woodburn, who becomes a captain of Vermont militia and serves under Stark at Bennington. The scene of the story is laid in southern Vermont, embracing principally Westminster, Guilford, Manchester, the British headquarters at Fort Ann, and Bennington. The story is concerned with the struggle between the Tories and Whigs in southern Vermont, the Westminster massacre and its consequences, the organization of the Rangers, and their actual resistance to Colonel Baum's detachment of Burgoyne's army.

Briefly, the plot is as follows. Sabrey Haviland, the heroine of the novel, is the daughter of a Tory squire who owns large tracts of land at Bennington. She is affianced to one Peters, a close friend of her father's, and a Tory speculator in the New Hampshire grants. She dislikes Peters, however, and upon meeting Harry Woodburn, the hero, she falls in love with him. Soon afterwards Woodburn rescues her from drowning in an ice-flow on the Connecticut River. Although Miss Haviland does not fully understand the business in which her father and Peters are engaged, she knows enough to suspect that injustice is being done to the local residents, and particularly to Woodburn. Accordingly, her sympathies are with the Whigs, who presently take possession of the court-house in Westminster to prevent the Tory party from holding a court under the authority of the governor of New York. The Whigs, who are unarmed, are attacked during the night by an armed force

of Tories. Several of their number are shot down, and William French, first martyr in the cause of liberty, is mortally wounded. The Tories now attempt to hold their court, but are interrupted by the local patriots, who arouse the populace against them. Being informed that Peters, during the fray, had dangerously wounded Woodburn, Miss Haviland now determines to break with Peters and secretly assist the local patriots. Through the agency of Barty Burt, a clever boy, she communicates with Woodburn, and henceforth keeps in touch with the Whigs.

Meanwhile, Peters confiscates the Woodburn homestead, leaving the mother of the hero in sickness and want. As a result of this privation Mrs. Woodburn dies. The son encounters the villain, but now, as later, Peters warily makes his escape.

At a convention of the Vermont Council of Safety at Manchester it was resolved to confiscate the property of Tories in order to raise money with which to fight the British; for by that time the vanguard of Burgoyne's army was hovering on the borders of Vermont. In the certainty of approaching conflict, Peters enlists as a colonel in the British army, expecting as a reward large concessions of land from Burgoyne. Woodburn now joins the rebel forces, assured by Miss Haviland of her interest in him and her loyalty to his cause. The heroine then definitely rejects Peters, who, through her father's interest, had attempted to coerce her into marriage; and she openly declares to the two men her loyalty to her adopted country. This conversation was overheard by a group of armed rebels hidden beneath a window of the Haviland house. They shout "Hurrah for the Tory's daughter!" which soon becomes something of a battle

cry among the militia. Miss Haviland, who refuses to accompany her father to the British headquarters, is seized while on her way to some relatives, and made captive by an agent of Peters. An attempt is made by Woodburn's men to rescue her; but the heroine, after a series of thrilling adventures, is recaptured by the agents of Peters and taken to the British headquarters. Here she stays with her father until she escapes with the help of the resourceful Barty Burt.

This clever lad has entered the camp disguised as a peddler. He now escorts her through the British lines to the house of an American sympathizer. On their way Miss Haviland and Barty witness the tragic death of Jane McRae,[1] an intimate friend, from whom the heroine had been separated early in the story.

Meanwhile, the New England militia under the command of General Stark prepares to meet Colonel Baum's division at Bennington. Sabrey Haviland, having been taken captive again by the British, is conducted to a Tory log-house near the scene of action. From this place she commands a view of the conflict between the opposing forces. At the moment when it seems that Stark's men are beaten, the heroine leaps out on a portico of the log-house, in open view of both armies, and, facing toward the Americans, waves her handkerchief and shouts encouragement. As soon as the Rangers saw her they raised the cry, "Forward, to the rescue of the Tory's daughter!" and, rushing forward, they drive the British from the field. In this action, as later when the reinforcements of Colonel Warner arrives to offset Breyman, Captain Woodburn distinguishes himself for bravery. The villain Peters is finally made

[1] This historically true incident is discussed on pages 135–137.

a prisoner of war. It is now disclosed that old Father Herriot, who has supplied the Rangers with money, is the father of Barty Burt, and an uncle of Harry Woodburn. To his son and nephew he leaves the remainder of his fortune, making known his identity on his deathbed. Woodburn, of course, marries Miss Haviland.

It is interesting to note that the novelist introduces Ethan Allen in the Conclusion, the scene of which is Bennington, about a year after the events of the story. Allen is depicted as a judge passing a death sentence upon one David Redding, a traitor to the American cause. In the story Redding figured as the tool of Peters. The latter, after his term of imprisonment has expired, retires, like Sherwood, into Canada, where he sinks into insignificance, despised and hated by all who know him.

The same qualities of description and narration that distinguish Thompson's earlier writing are manifest in *The Rangers*. As an example of his power of description we quote the following graphic account of the breaking up of the ice on the Connecticut River in the early spring of 1775.

> Among the many wild and imposing exhibitions of nature, peculiar to the mountainous regions of our northern clime, there is no one, perhaps, of more fearful magnificence, than that which is sometimes presented in the breaking up of one of our large rivers by a winter flood; when the ice, in its full strength, enormous thickness, and rock-like solidity, is rent asunder, with loud, crashing explosions, and hurled up into ragged mountains, and borne onward before the raging torrent with inconceivable force and frightful velocity, spreading devastation along the banks in its course, and sweeping away the strongest fabrics of human power which stand opposed to its progress, like the feeble weeds that disappear from the path of a tornado.

Such a spectacle, as they reached their proposed stand, now burst on the view of the astonished travellers. As far as the eye could reach upwards along the windings of the stream, the whole channel was filled with the mighty mass of ice, driving down towards them with fearful rapidity, and tumbling, crashing, grinding, and forcing its way, as it came, with collisions that shook the surrounding forest, and with the din and tumult of an army of chariots rushing together in battle. Here, tall trees on the bank were beaten down and overwhelmed, or, wrenched off at the roots and thrown upwards, were whirled along on the top of the rushing volume, like feathers on the tossing wave. There, the changing mass was seen swelling up into mountain-like elevations, to roll onward a while, and, then gradually sinking away, be succeeded by another in another form; while, with resistless front, the whole immense moving body drove steadily on, ploughing and rending its way into the unbroken sheet of ice before it, which burst, divided, and was borne down beneath the boiling flood, or hurled upwards into the air, with a noise sometimes resembling the sounds of exploding muskets, and sometimes the crash of falling towers.

But the noise of another and similar commotion, in an opposite direction now attracted their attention. . . . Through the whole visible reach of the Connecticutt, a long, white, glittering column of ice, with its ridgy and bristling top towering high above the adjacent banks, was sweeping by and onward, like the serried lines of an army advancing to the charge; while the broad valley around, even back to the summits of the far-off hills, was resounding with the deafening din that rose from the extended line of the booming avalanche, with the deep rumblings of an earthquake mingled with the tumultuous roar of an approaching tempest.

If *The Rangers* is less interesting than *The Green Mountain Boys*, it is not because of any deficiency in the historical background. Such events as the Westminster massacre and the battle of Bennington afford the novelist a good opportunity to employ the type of narrative

in which he excelled. And for the most part he handles this historical material effectively. Let us compare his moving account of the death of Jane McRae with the simple historical facts. We must concede to him as a matter of course, despite his avowed purpose of representing historic incident with literal accuracy, the full liberty of a story-teller — otherwise let us go directly to history. To begin with, it is necessary, in the interest of truth, to allow for Thompson's biased estimate of General Burgoyne's character. Both in *The Green Mountain Boys* and in *The Rangers* Burgoyne is pictured as cruel and oppressive, and as disposed to allow the Indians a free hand in their depredations on the natives. That is an untrue picture. Burgoyne disliked the employment of such allies, but his orders on the subject were positive. The effort which he made to establish among the savages the rules of civilized warfare had been without effect. They continued to burn and murder on the line of march, making no distinction between the loyalists and the rebels, and their conduct was responsible for sending many hitherto neutral persons over into the American camp. At the end of July (1777), the incident occurred which Thompson has so graphically described in his book. This was the murder of Jane McRae by some of Burgoyne's Indians. The facts, so far as we can learn them, were as follows.[1]

A marauding party of savages, headed by a chief called "the Panther," captured, near Fort Edward, Jane McRae, the young daughter of a Scotch clergyman. Miss McRae was visiting at the house of a Mrs.

[1] B. Tuckerman, *Life of General Philip Schuyler*, pp. 209, 210; Thacher's *Military Journal*, p. 95; Mrs. E. F. Ellet, *Women of the American Revolution*, ii, 255–261; J. Sparks, *Life of Benedict Arnold*, pp. 101–106.

McNeill. Both women were loyalists, and Jane was engaged to an officer in the British army. The Indians were taking their captives toward the British camp when they were pursued by a party of Americans, and the two women became separated. Mrs. McNeill arrived in safety, but nothing was heard of Jane till the next day, when the Panther appeared, bearing her scalp. Her body was next discovered in the forest, pierced by three bullets. Various stories were told of how the young woman was killed, but the exact circumstances are not definitely known. Of the different published accounts, Thompson followed that of Jared Sparks as the one that he deemed most probable.[1] But it will be noticed that the novelist adds one or two details of his own invention; for example, he represents Miss McRae as being murdered with a tomahawk, whereas Sparks, basing his account upon the testimony of Standish, says she was first shot through the heart, and then scalped. Further, Thompson represents her as being dressed in her wedding-gown, preparatory to marrying Captain Jones, who awaits her at the British fort. This touch was added probably to heighten the tragic effect. According to his account, after the party had set forth along the road to

[1] The following excerpt from a letter written to Thompson by Jared Sparks (dated May 17, 1852) shows clearly the source of Thompson's version of the death of Jane McRae. The original of this unpublished letter is in the Harvard Library. See also the *Life of Benedict Arnold*, pp. 102–104.

"Your remarks on the massacre of Jane McRae, which came to hand some time ago, I am persuaded are founded on a true state of facts. I was perfectly convinced of the truth of what was told to me by Mr. Standish. He was in the full vigor of mind and body. He was certainly present at the massacre, and saw everything that took place: and the details of such an event must have made too deep an impression to be erased from his memory. He was at the same time taken by the Indians, and conveyed as a prisoner to Burgoyne's camp. His account agreed in all the particulars with what was said to me afterwards by General Morgan Lewis, who was at Fort Edward when the massacre occurred." See Appendix B.

the north they met another party of Indians. The chief attending Miss McRae, fearing to lose the reward for bringing her safe to Captain Jones, refused to give her up to the rival chief, and a lively debate ensued.

> At this instant, white streams of smoke, followed by the startling reports of muskets, suddenly burst from the neighboring thicket, and the band of concealed scouts [Americans], with challenging hurrahs, were seen springing from their coverts, and rapidly gliding from tree to tree towards the spot. The astonished and unprepared Indians . . . with one accord, slunk instantly away into the surrounding bushes.
>
> Scarcely had they disappeared, however, before the tall chief [the rival] . . . again darted out into the opening; when, with a quick, wild glance around him, and a yell of fiendish triumph, he rapidly whirled his arm aloft, and, the next instant, the glittering tomahawk was seen, like a shooting gleam of light, swiftly speeding its way on its death-doing errand.
>
> One solitary, piercing shriek, suddenly cut short, and sinking into an appalling groan, rose from the fatal spot; while the white robes of the victim, like the ruffled pinions of some suddenly-struck bird, came fluttering to the ground.

Whether this graphic account be strictly accurate or not is, after all, immaterial. It is evident that Thompson aimed at historical correctness, which he attained in far greater measure than many other romancers; but, what is far more important, he knew how to make history palatable to the average reader. If the popular novelist cannot be also an exact historian, he can at least make historical events familiar to a large audience. And this is an important service in itself, quite apart from the pleasure he gives to the readers of his lively yarn.

The influence of Cooper is not quite so perceptible in *The Rangers* as in *The Green Mountain Boys*, but it can be seen in a number of instances. For example, after Sabrey Haviland has sought refuge from her Tory pur-

suers, in a deserted cabin far from the highway, she is attacked late at night by a pack of hungry wolves. They have already devoured a drunken Indian who had fallen asleep on the floor, when they turn upon Sabrey, hiding in the loft. She seizes the dead Indian's gun, shoots straight at the wolves, and thus drives them off. The exact circumstances have no counterpart in Cooper; nevertheless, this type of adventure is found in *The Pioneers*, where Elizabeth Temple is attacked by a mountain panther, and rescued by the timeliness of Natty Bumppo's unerring shot. Again, the revelation of old Father Herriot's identity at the end of the story reminds us of Major Effingham's relation to young Edwards, except that in the former case the relationship is not known to either of the persons concerned. Natty Bumppo may easily have suggested to our author a character like the old hunter, Tom Dunning. The heroine herself, like Jane McRae, though drawn partly from actual historical records, is depicted in the manner of Cooper. Comparison of the dialogue between Woodburn and Miss Haviland with that between, let us say, young Edwards and Elizabeth Temple in *The Pioneers*, or between Heyward and Alice Graham in *The Last of the Mohicans*, shows a striking similarity in manner, except that Thompson's lovers use an even more stilted and artificial language than Cooper's. It has been said that Cooper carved his heroines out of wood;[1] and, we should like to add, so did Thompson — that is, if May Martin, Alma Hendee, and Sabrey Haviland be considered simply as lovers. On the other hand, the Tory's daughter makes up for her insipidity as a lover by the boldness of her conduct in moments of great danger.

[1] W. P. Trent, *History of American Literature*, p. 249.

She is, indeed, far more courageous than are most of the heroines of the Leatherstocking Tales. In general, Thompson's female characters are not quite so helpless as their better-known models, although they are fully as inane.

If our author is indebted to Cooper for the type of character and incident noted above, it is equally true that he owed his incredibly precocious boys to Scott. Doubtless, as he intimated in various prefaces, Thompson encountered the originals of nearly all his characters either in the life he knew at first hand, in historical records, or in the reminiscences of "aged relics." But it is evident that in selecting these characters he was influenced by definite literary models. For example, assuming that the novelist knew, or had heard of, the prototypes of David Butler and Barty Burt, it is nevertheless obvious that he could never have drawn them as they existed in fact, but must have exaggerated their precocity and endowed them with unnatural adroitness. Knowing that Thompson read Scott, and observing the striking similarity between these caricatured boys and Eddie Ochiltree or Flibbertigibbitt, can one deny the influence of the master? Scott's influence is seen, moreover, in our author's general method of introducing his characters, and further, in his manner of describing their appearance, actions, and so forth.

Unfortunately, Thompson had never studied literary models with sufficient care to master the technique of his craft. Nor did he ever learn to write with artistic precision. Lack of early training may have been largely responsible for this, as it was in the case of Cooper. We have shown that the novelist owed perhaps the main part of his education to his own individual efforts; and

self-training, however commendable in spirit, is always faulty. But even so, it is extremely doubtful if he could ever have attained distinction of style under the most favorable circumstances. *Nascitur poeta, non fit.* No writer of really great potential literary power could ever have fumbled so awkwardly with the language as Thompson did. He not only wrote badly constructed sentences with annoying frequency, but he never possessed a sure feeling for the relative value of words. Hence he employs the inexact word instead of the exact one. He writes "pants" when he obviously means breeches, "wounded" for injured, "dimpling" for dimply or dimpled, and so forth. Moreover, he regularly employs stereotyped phrases, as "the pampered sons of luxury and ease," "treacherous scoundrel," "menacing attitude," "brandished fist," and "unmitigated malice." And he occasionally introduces colloquial words like "sloppy," and slang words like "phiz." Many of the expressions that he uses are found in all their original freshness in earlier novels; in Thompson's pages they are shopworn. These defects are not due to carelessness, for our author composed slowly; they are rather the inevitable result partly of inherent incapacity, partly of inadequate training. Perhaps no more convincing proof of Thompson's descriptive and narrative power can be cited than the unfailing interest with which his *best* stories are read even by those who recognize their amateurish literary quality.

In his next romance Thompson once more turned from the Revolution to the Settlement. *Gaut Gurley; or the Trappers of Umbagog* (1857) — also published as *The Demon Trapper of Umbagog* — is a tale of border life in Maine. It is a capital story of adventure, the scene of

which, as its title suggests, is laid in the Lake Umbagog region near the border-line of New Hampshire. If in a purely literary sense *Gaut Gurley* is inferior to some of the earlier novels, it is, to the lover of nature, perhaps the most delightful book our author ever wrote. The atmosphere of mountain and lake, of forest and stream, of the winding trail and the hunter's cabin, pervades this Cooperesque romance almost from beginning to end. What sportsman can resist the lure of trapping beaver, bringing down a bull-moose, a mountain panther, or a catamount, or landing a seven-pound trout? Of hunting and fishing, of thrilling adventure in the wilderness, here is God's plenty! A recent critic has noted that Thompson had none of Cooper's poetry, that he was little concerned with the magic of nature.[1] This is obviously true. The novelist modestly restricts himself to faithful description of natural objects which he has patiently observed; yet in *Gaut Gurley*, more than anywhere else, he describes the scenery of forest, hill, and stream with the enthusiasm of a lover of nature.

The story itself is built around the darkly romantic career of Gaut Gurley, the demon trapper of Umbagog — a traitor, a robber, a murderer, and a pirate! The opening scene is laid in Boston. Here Mark Elwood, a supposedly prosperous merchant, is entertaining guests at his fashionable home. During the evening he is visited by Gaut Gurley, with whom, it appears, he has been mysteriously connected. After his guests have departed, Mark Elwood meets the trapper in a gambling den, and the two men play at cards until daylight. The former, through gambling and speculation, has lost heavily of late, and is now, as a result of accumulated debts thus

[1] *The American Novel*, p. 58.

contracted, forced into bankruptcy. After a period of dissipation, he emigrates with his wife and son to Maine, buying a log-house in the border settlement at Lake Umbagog. Here he attempts to start life over again, and is apparently succeeding, when his son Claud accidentally meets Avis Gurley, the trapper's daughter. The two fall in love. Gurley now organizes a "bee" to clear Elwood's slash land. On this occasion he renews his intimacy with the former merchant, over whom he has an unaccountable mastery. Soon afterwards the trappers of Lake Umbagog go on a hunting trip into the north mountains; and they invite the Elwoods and Gurley to accompany them. When they reach a central point from which they can extend their operations, they construct a cabin for headquarters, leaving it in charge of Gaut. They now hunt in pairs — Phillips with young Elwood, and Codman with the father. A young Indian, Tomah, secretly keeps in touch with the demon trapper.

Before this expedition Claud had become engaged to Avis. But he had also accidentally met the beautiful daughter of an Indian chief, whose life he had helped to save. This Indian girl was really white in appearance, owing to atavistic reversion to a European ancestor. Fluella now attracted Claud more than Avis attracted him; moreover, she had fallen desperately in love with him. Incidentally, Mrs. Elwood learns of the girl's affection for her son, and hopes it will divert his attention from Avis, whose father she hates. For, prior to the expedition in question, a family feud had existed between the Elwoods and Gurley, despite the son's engagement.

During the absence of the trappers in the upper reaches of the mountains, Gaut robs the headquarters

of its store of furs, and then burns down the building. Upon their return the hunters seek to establish his guilt by obtaining specimens of fur which had been sold to a dealer in a neighboring town. At the trial of the demon trapper even Mark Elwood testifies against him, thus incurring his bitter enmity. But Tomah, the young Indian, identifies the furs as his own share of the joint earnings of the company, which he had indirectly sold to the dealer. Thus Gaut is officially exonerated, though his neighbors still believe him guilty.

In the latter part of the ensuing winter Gaut Gurley persuades Elwood to go on another hunting trip into the woods, this time for beaver only. Elwood is so completely under the trapper's influence that he assents, despite his better judgment; but his son, suspecting Gurley, insists on accompanying the two men. On this trip the evil genius of the party manages to separate father and son, and then kills the former. When the latter returns the crafty hunter attempts to do away with him also, in order to prevent news of the murder from reaching the settlement. But he succeeds only in wounding young Elwood, who is soon found and cared for by Fluella. The Indian girl had been following the party and had actually witnessed the murder.

When Gaut returns to the settlement he circulates a plausible story concerning the whereabouts of father and son. His neighbors, however, suspect that the Elwoods have met with foul play. Accordingly, Phillips summons a sheriff, and with the aid of a posse traces Gurley to an old bear's cave on the hill above the shore of Lake Umbagog. Here, after many efforts to dislodge the fugitive, they finally succeed in capturing him, and then confine him in an improvised jail.

At the trial the prosecuting attorney submits presumptive evidence of the trapper's guilt, but is unable to secure a conviction until the appearance of Fluella. The Indian girl then relates her story of the murder; before she can finish, however, she is shot at by the infuriated trapper. No further evidence is now needed of his guilt, and he is immediately placed in jail to await final trial and sentence.

Meanwhile, Avis releases Claud from his engagement to her, leaving the young man free to marry Fluella. A bachelor uncle — Arthur Elwood — gives the bride a generous dowry, and later marries Claud's mother. Some time afterwards, when the young couple are returning from Cuba, their ship is attacked by pirates. An American cruiser intervenes, taking the pirate crew captive. Among the latter is Gaut Gurley, who had escaped from jail. In a letter which he sends to Claud he discloses the source of his mysterious power over Mark Elwood. The latter, it seems, while engaged with Gurley many years ago in smuggling silk from Canada to the States, had murdered a customs-house officer. And the demon trapper had kept this secret as a means of blackmailing Elwood, and using him for his own purposes. Gaut now ends his life by jumping overboard from the cruiser. Thus the waves close over "the traitor, the robber, the murderer, and the pirate" — and so the story ends.

From our outline of this highly colored romance (which suggests a dime novel), one would naturally suppose that the characters and incidents were purely fictitious. As a matter of fact, *Gaut Gurley* is based on an actual occurrence which Thompson may have remembered from an old newspaper account or from local tradi-

tion. In his original sketch of *The Trappers of Umbagog* one finds under "Founding Facts" the statement that in the year 1830 a cold-blooded murder was committed among the trappers and hunters of Lake Umbagog. The circumstances, according to this sketch, were as follows. Three men, known as Robbins, Hines, and Cloutman, trapped in company one fall, having their camp on the shore of Lake Umbagog. Toward the close of the hunting season, about the first of December, Hines and Cloutman returned from their line of sable traps, which extended forty miles along the lake into the wilderness, and found their camp in ashes, and their valuable furs either burned or stolen. Robbins, who had been left in charge, was missing. A heavy snowstorm came up. The two trappers set off for Colebrook, the nearest settlement, and thence to Paulsburgh (now Milan) on the Androscoggin. It was here that the three men lived. When Hines and Cloutman discovered Robbins, they charged him with stealing the furs and setting fire to the camp. This he wholly denied. But in the course of a few weeks they learned that Robbins had sold furs in Bethel which were identified as those left in camp. They prosecuted him and obtained a settlement.

When the hunting season opened again, however, Robbins tried to induce his former partners to join him in another trip. They at first declined. Later, Hines and his son decided to go. The three men then made a trip to the Chaudière River. After a while Robbins returned alone, and the Hineses could not be found. The neighbors, becoming suspicious, searched the lake country for traces of the missing men. They discovered some garments. They also learned from an Indian that he had found a dead body and had buried it. After secur-

ing a warrant for the arrest of Robbins, they succeeded in cornering the trapper in his camp. The alleged murderer was then taken to Colebrook, examined, bound over, and lodged in the Lancaster jail. On the morning of the trial it was found that Robbins had escaped, leaving a trail of blood which showed that he had forced his way through a wall of the jail. He was never heard of again, although there were vague rumors that he had been seen in Maine, or that he had gone west, or that he was on his way to the West Indies to join the pirates.

The connection between this supposedly true account of an actual crime and the incidents of Thompson's story is clear enough. Robbins is obviously the original of Gaut Gurley, Hines and his son are the Elwoods, and truth is evidently stranger than fiction. But the comparison does not end here. Thompson has added from "Facts disconnected with above tragedy but appertaining to the location" the necessary finishing touches of melodrama:

> Till lately an old Indian has lived at Lake Umbagog, being now wholly blind . . . about 100 years old. Time of murder he was active. Had a hovel & $300 worth of property. Had married a beautiful squaw & had many children. Put her away & married another squaw — equally remarkable for her ugliness. Old Indian's name *Matalluc*. There was also a man by the name of Phillips for a long period the most celebrated hunter on these lakes. Another Indian (educated) [the original of Tomah] lived in that vicinity.[1]

Except for the element of romantic love, these notes furnished virtually all of the raw material for *Gaut Gur-*

[1] Quoted from the original manuscript of Thompson's plan of *The Trappers of Umbagog* in the possession of Mr. Charles M. Thompson. The novel was published first as *Gaut Gurley; or, the Trappers of Umbagog*, and later as *The Demon Trapper of Umbagog*. Thompson evidently preferred the former title, for it is the one used in his collected works.

ley. In the use which Thompson made of this material, however, we discover nothing original.

Here again we plainly see the influence of Cooper. First of all there is the love affair between a white youth and an Indian maid, suggesting the love of Uncas for Cora Munro in *The Last of the Mohicans*. Perhaps this comparison will seem forced, since the circumstances are different; still, the general idea and situation are strangely similar. Again, if certain characteristics of Natty Bumppo appear in the wary old hunter, Tom Dunning, how much more obvious is the similarity between the hunter in *Gaut Gurley* and Cooper's famous scout. In comparing Phillips with Bumppo (as he is seen in *The Pioneers*) it is only necessary to quote the sentiments of the two men on a common subject to show their kinship. Young Elwood and Phillips have been fishing in Lake Umbagog for trout, and the old hunter has just landed a big one.

"There, sir!" exclaimed the hunter, seizing the trout by the gills, and triumphantly holding it up to view, "there is about what I bargained for: two feet long, not an inch shorter, — seven pounds weight, and not an ounce lighter! Now, being satisfied, I am done."

"What, leave off with such luck?" asked Claud in surprise.

"Yes, young man," said the other, "I hold it all but a downright sin to draw from God's storehouse a single pound more than is really needed. This will last my family as long as it will keep, this warm weather, with the plenty of moose-meat we shall have. Anything more is a waste, which *I* will not commit. And *you*, sir, who have just hauled in your third and largest one, I perceive, and have now nearly as many pounds as I have, — what can you want of more?" [1]

[1] *Gaut Gurley*, p. 72.

In *The Pioneers*, it will be remembered, Natty Bumppo deprecates the unsportsmanlike slaughtering of pigeons in their spring flight over Templeton. Compare his sentiments in this regard with those of the hunter cited above.

"It's much better to kill only such as you want, without wasting your powder and lead, than to be firing into God's creatures in this wicked manner. But I came out for a bird, and you know the reason why I like small game, Mr. Oliver, and now I have got one I will go home, for I don't relish to see these wasty ways that you are all practysing, as if the least thing was n't made for use, and not to destroy." [1]

Incidentally, Phillips is an intimate friend of the few remaining Indians in the Umbagog region, particularly of the old chief, Wenongonet, the last of the long line of Sagamores — "the last ever to stand here and tell the young white man [Elwood] the story of their greatness and the fate of their tribe." In other words, he is like Chingachgook, the last survivor of the Mohicans, whom Thompson probably had in mind. And we find an echo of Leatherstocking in the wistful allusion of Phillips to "these wild lakes where I have spent my whole life in hunting moose, and the other wild animals known only in the unbroken forest."

In many respects, however, Thompson is quite independent of all literary models. For example, take the following ironical revelation of Indian character in reference to the civilizing effect of education on the savage. Avis Gurley has just been introduced to Tomah.

"I have often thought I should feel interested in seeing an educated native of the forest," remarked Avis, after the civilities of the introduction had been exchanged. "Books, when

[1] *The Pioneers*, p. 252.

you became able to read and understand them," she continued, turning to the Indian, "books must have opened a new world to you, and the many new and curious things you found in them must have been exceedingly gratifying to you, Mr. Tomah."

"Yes, many curious things in books," replied Tomah, indifferently.

"And also much valuable knowledge?" rejoined Avis, interrogatively.

"Valuable enough to some folks, suppose," replied the other, with the air of one speaking on a subject in which he felt no particular interest. "Lawyers make money; preachers get good pay for talking what they learn in books; so doctors."

"But surely," persisted the former, who, though disappointed in his replies, yet still expected to see, if she could draw him out, the naturally shrewd mind of the native made brilliant by the light of science, "surely you consider an education a good thing for all, giving those who receive it a great advantage over those who do not?"

"Yes, education good thing," responded Tomah, his stolid countenance beginning to lighten up at the idea which now struck him as involving the chief if not the sole benefit of his scientific acquirements; "yes, education good, very good, sometime. Instance: I go to Boston with my moose next winter; show him for pay, one, two days; then reckon up money — add; then reckon up expenses — subtract; tell how much I make. Make much, stay; make little, go to other place. Yes, education good thing."

The novelist then definitely states his conviction, based upon actual observation of partly civilized Indians, that education "seems often to unsettle and confuse the mind of the red man"; and naïvely adds that in his natural condition the savage can "*at least* realize the happy picture which the poet [Pope] has drawn of him." This is as interesting a revelation of the author's mind as it is of the Indian's!

No one but a hunter and fisherman like Thompson could ever have written *Gaut Gurley*. There is in this book the authentic note of the sportsman who has climbed mountains, ridden horseback, hunted wolves, and angled for trout. There is also the inevitable fish story, which incidentally reveals, better than volumes of discussion, the novelist's fondness for spinning a lively yarn. The hunter's account of how he caught his largest trout is worth quoting as a specimen of Thompson's art.

"Well, I don't know as you will believe the story," answered the other Phillips, "but it will be equally true, if you don't. Some years ago I was out on the Umbagog, for a mess of trout, but couldn't get a bite; and, seeing a flock of black ducks in a neighboring cove, I hauled in my line, and rowed off towards them, thinking I might get a shot, and so have something to carry home, by way of mending my luck at fishing. But, before I got near enough to count with much certainty on the effect of a shot, if I fired, they all flew up, but one, which, though it seemed to be trying hard enough, could not raise its body out of the water. As my canoe drifted in nearer, I once or twice raised my rifle to fire at it; but it acted so strangely, flapping the water with its wings, and tugging away at swimming, without appearing to gain scarce a single foot, that I soon laid down my piece and concluded I would try to take it alive, supposing it must have got fast tangled with something, but with what, I was wholly unable to conceive. So, taking up my oar, and gunning my canoe, so as to send it by within reach of the bird, I gave two or three strong pulls, threw down the oar, put out my hand, and sat ready for the grab, which the next moment I made, seizing the panting and now sinking duck by one of its outspread wings, and pulling it in, with a big trout fastened to its foot and leg so tight by the teeth that the hold did not give way till the greedy fish was brought slapping over the side, and landed safely in the bottom of the canoe. That trout, when I got home, weighed just seven pounds and nine ounces."

One night the trappers of Umbagog gather about the camp-fire and tell of their most remarkable adventures in the woods. The old hunter's story is the most highly colored, but all are "fishy." One yarn in particular, however, that of the trapper, shows Thompson's minute observation of the habits of beavers. It is rather unfortunate that so much that is real in the book should be sacrificed for melodramatic effect. But despite this flaw in treatment (and it is a grave one) we repeat that in our judgment *Gaut Gurley* is one of the most interesting of all Thompson's novels.

Our author now undertook the extremely difficult task — one clearly beyond his powers — of reconstructing the New England social life of the mid-seventeenth century. On this background he attempted to fill in the romantic story of King Philip's War. The result is bad for two reasons: first, the novelist worked with inadequate historical equipment; and second, he lacked sufficient imaginative power and literary skill to revive the spirit and *mores* of an historically remote period. So long as he modestly confined himself to description of the Vermont frontier, which he knew at first hand, or to Revolutionary history, which was still fresh in the memory of at least a few natives, he succeeded even better than he had anticipated. But in *The Doomed Chief; or Two Hundred Years Ago* (1860), published in later editions as *The Doomed Chief. A Thrilling Tale of Philip, the Great Indian King, and the Early Colonists of New England*, he was on unfamiliar ground. Adequate treatment of such a theme requires the genius of a Hawthorne, not that of a Thompson or even of a Cooper. The book is a flat failure, considered from the point of view either of history or of romance. But it possesses incidental interest for us in revealing the author's

familiarity with Cotton Mather's *Magnalia*, Sparks's *Life of Eliot*, Thatcher's *Indian Biography*, the results of Schoolcraft's ethnological researches among North American Indians, Carver's *Travels*, Peter Folger's *A Looking Glass for the Times*, and Church's *Entertaining Passages Relating to Philip's War*. To what extent the novelist was indebted to *New England's Crisis* is not apparent, but we know that he had read Benjamin Tompson's poem. Moreover, he regards the crisis in New England from the point of view of our first poet: he thinks that it was brought about through decadence in manners and morals, or in other words, that the war was God's punishment. Since the novelist refers once or twice to "contemporary records," it is quite possible that he was also familiar with Hubbard's *Narratives of the Troubles with the Indians of New England* and Captain John Mason's *History of the Pequot War*. At any rate, it is clear that he took pains to orient himself as fully as he could in this comparatively remote period. But a criticism of Cooper for glorifying the Mohican tribe of Indians (which he inserted in a footnote) is as futile as it is original.

> The Mohegans, whom the great American novelist seems to have delighted to exalt over all other tribes of Indians, were uniformly the servile adherents of the whites in all their wars with the natives, and were therefore everywhere branded by the red men as traitors to their race. The American people love bravery and independence of character, and perhaps they should [not] be allowed to [s]tickle at the treason once so useful to them. But is that any reason why they should now any longer be asked to continue their paens of praise over a nation of traitors? [1]

[1] *The Doomed Chief*, p. 343, footnote. For further criticism of Cooper, see Thompson's unpublished lecture on "American Romances," which is printed in Appendix D, p. 309.

Historically the story is concerned with the prosecution of the Indians at Plymouth under the instigation of Deacon Mogridge, their defence by Roger Williams, and their subsequent execution; with King Philip's prophetic denunciation of this outrage, and his virtual declaration of war; with the interview of the "Praying Indians" with their pastor, the apostle John Eliot, and their subsequent fate; with Philip's alliance with the Nipmucks, and the skirmishes that followed with the volunteers under Mosely and Willis; with the prophetic vision of Passaconaway, the aged seer, showing the destiny of the red men, and also that of their white conquerors; with the Great Swamp fight at the stronghold of the Narragansetts, the conflagration, the massacre, and the disastrous retreat; with the last stand of the Indians over the grave of their fathers at Mount Hope; and finally, with the deaths of Philip (Metacom) and Wetamoo. Perhaps the pictures drawn of King Philip, Roger Williams, John Eliot, and a few others constitute the most interesting part of a markedly inferior romance.

Even more disappointing, however, is the novelist's last book, *Centeola; or the Maid of the Mounds* (1864). We have already explained the origin of this work; and it only remains to add that an entirely imaginative story, the scenes and characters of which were assumed to have existed seven centuries back, was too great an undertaking for a writer of Thompson's modest ability. For it obviously requires real genius and infinite skill to write an adequate novel of this type; and our author possessed neither. But notwithstanding the incongruities of *Centeola*, its anachronisms, and its ignorant language, there were enough undiscriminating readers to buy out two editions of the book within a year of its publication.

More interesting and more valuable than *Centeola* are the four shorter tales that follow in the same volume. These stories are founded on incidents of actual occurrence in Vermont. Here Thompson is once more on familiar ground. In *The Starving Settlers*, he tells in inimitable fashion the story of one of the early settlers of Waterbury;[1] in *The Unfathomable Mystery*, he gives us an interesting account of the "Berlin Murder";[2] in *The Rustic Financiers*, he shows us rascals overreaching rascals; and finally, in *The Counterfeiter*, he relates one of the many feats of counterfeiting performed by the notorious Stephen Burroughs and his confederates.[3] Of these tales the first is certainly the best. Indeed, in our judgment, it is the most genuinely moving short story in existence of the hardship, sacrifice, and family devotion of the Vermont pioneer. It possesses, moreover, a certain historical value as a picture of the times. But the cleverest story in this volume is *The Rustic Financiers*, an amusing sketch of three sly rogues who by a smart trick expose the cupidity of some deacons and church folk, and, incidentally, enrich themselves. There is a bit of good satire in this little sketch. Nowhere else is Thompson's shrewd Yankee humor shown to better advantage.

[1] See chapter I, p. 10.
[2] See chapter II, p. 70.
[3] See chapter III, p. 85.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

IN concluding our treatment of Thompson's work we shall summarize his literary characteristics, and note his distinctive contribution to American literature. In order to avoid needless repetition we shall not attempt to recapitulate his progress as a writer from the crude apprenticeship to letters shown in *The Adventures of Timothy Peacock*, through the far superior, but still amateurish, work of *May Martin*, through the continued improvement in narrative displayed in *The Green Mountain Boys*, to the culmination of his modest literary art in *Locke Amsden*. Nor shall we trace the gradual decline slightly perceptible in *The Rangers*, distinctly noticeable in *Gaut Gurley*, and painfully apparent in *The Doomed Chief*. Indeed, we have just explained the failure of the last-mentioned book and of *Centola* as the inevitable consequence of venturing into unfamiliar fields. But a summary of his literary characteristics, based upon a careful examination of his half-dozen novels taken as a whole, may enable the reader to see the novelist in better perspective.

To begin with, Thompson knew the Vermont frontier as well as Cooper knew that of New York; consequently, all his books dealing with Vermont give reasonably true pictures of frontier life. This is important because it means that his work is of permanent interest, not only to the local historian, but to all readers who may wish

to know something of the subject. Moreover, Thompson's work in this field can never be duplicated; it has the uniqueness of contemporaneity.

Second, Thompson naïvely accepted the point of view of his place and time. He was not sophisticated. He did not subject the word of others or the accessible historical records to the scrutinizing test of a scientific historian. Had he been skeptical, he might have written more cautiously, but it is doubtful if he could have written so interestingly. His lively stories owe some of their popularity to the honest prejudices of their author.

Third, the novelist did not preach or moralize excessively, as was the habit of most writers of his time. And it is interesting to notice that his most popular romances, such as *May Martin* and *The Green Mountain Boys*, are freest of all his books from digressions of this sort; while some of the later novels, such as *Gaut Gurley* and *The Doomed Chief*, are weighted down, in spots, with heavy moral timber. In this respect he appears to have suffered something of a retrogression.

Fourth, Thompson knew the art of telling a straight story plainly and rapidly better, indeed, than did many more-learned contemporary writers. We have repeatedly said that this is his most distinctive literary trait. Unfortunately, he did not have an early opportunity to develop this native endowment through proper training; he was thus hampered throughout his career by an irremedial deficiency. His narrative power is best shown, perhaps, in *The Green Mountain Boys*.

Fifth, our author possessed excellent descriptive talent, but this also suffered from lack of early training. In *Locke Amsden*, *The Rangers*, and *Gaut Gurley* we find descriptive passages that show Thompson's sensitive-

ness to natural beauty, his perception of commonly unobserved details, his sense of form and color, and his unaffected love of nature. Had his vocabulary matched his perceptions he would doubtless have left us descriptions comparable with some of Cooper's.

Sixth, there runs through every one of his novels a rich vein of droll Yankee humor. It is not only that his comic characters are really comic rather than ludicrous in a sense not intended by the author; but that even his heroes are sufficiently human to laugh and to make others laugh. In this respect he differs from some of his contemporaries, who seemed to feel the need of uniform high seriousness in their important characters. The common practice of setting aside a foreigner or recent emigrant who uses broken English for the rôle of comedian, while the hero, heroine, and select company are piously solemn, was not justified in honestly realistic fiction. And in making Ethan Allen, Seth Warner, and General Stark unconventional in this regard, our author performed a modest but real service to American literature.

These characteristics are all positive, but it is obvious that Thompson had many grave defects as a writer. Let us summarize them. First, he lacked adequate power of characterization. One feels this the more after reading Cooper, who has been charged by Professor Lounsbury with being weak in this respect. But Cooper gave us at least three notable characters, in Harvey Birch, Natty Bumppo, and Chingachgook; and one of these — Natty Bumppo or Leatherstocking — is perhaps the most famous creation of an American novelist. In comparison with any of these personages, can we call the Ethan Allen or Seth Warner depicted by Thompson great? Obviously

not; furthermore, both are famous in their own right. But what of our author's minor characters — what of Woodburn, Pete Jones, Phillips, Gaut Gurley? Again we are forced to admit that he has failed to make any contribution to the list of well-known characters in American fiction. In a measure, however, he has done something to make Ethan Allen and Seth Warner better known; more, in fact, than any other writer has done.

Second, the novelist lacked adequate vocabulary and sense of form in language, to say nothing of distinction of style. If his narrative and descriptive power are markedly potent even under this disadvantage, one is led to speculate how far they might have carried him without it. Indeed, this defect more than anything else has contributed to the author's lack of recognition both from professional critics and from cultivated readers; hence it has done much to jeopardize his standing with posterity. One is tempted to say at this point that what the novelist needed most was a good course in freshman composition.

Third, Thompson lacked versatility. When he wrote of Vermont, as in *The Green Mountain Boys*, he made a definite contribution to our literature; but when he attempted to portray King Philip or Centeola or to write a political satire, he made a successful bid for oblivion.

Finally, in balancing his good and bad qualities as a writer, one must not overlook that subtle element of vitality, which ultimately determines the fate of all literary endeavor. Whatever may be the defects of *The Green Mountain Boys*, the indisputable evidence of its continued popularity for nearly a century cannot be evaded. Indeed, this amazing vitality is the more impressive in view of the obvious shortcomings of the book.

And it is well to remember that *May Martin*, *Locke Amsden*, and *The Rangers* are still in print.

Moreover, the moral tone of all Thompson's novels is uniformly wholesome. In this important matter we can safely apply to our author what Professor Lounsbury wrote of Cooper:

> Whatever else we may say of his writings, their influence is always a healthy influence. Narrow and prejudiced he sometimes was in his opinions; but he hated whatever was mean and low in character. . . . Here are no incitements to passion, no prurient suggestions of sensual delight. The air which breathes through all his fictions is as pure as that which sweeps the streets of his native town.

Thompson's contribution to American literature is as modest as it is definite. He has given us the most widely read novels of the district school prior to *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*, the best descriptions extant of the Vermont frontier, and by far the most popular romance of the immediate school of Cooper. He was a pioneer in New England as were Simms in South Carolina, Kennedy in Maryland, and Bird in Pennsylvania. Thus he assisted in a modest way to raise the novel to a respected position in American literature. However slight may have been his influence on other writers, it could not have been on the generality of readers wholly disproportionate to his great popularity. And finally, to Daniel P. Thompson himself, no other tribute could be so gratifying as that already paid him by prominent Vermonters who have declared that he has done more than any other person to perpetuate the early history of his native state.

Part III

THE HONEST LAWYER
OR
THE FAIR CASTAWAY

"The Honest Lawyer" is the novel that Judge Thompson left uncompleted at his death. The "founding facts," as he calls them, constitute a preliminary outline of the story. This posthumous novel is here published for the first time from the original manuscript in the possession of Mr. Charles M. Thompson.

FOUNDING FACTS FOR THE TALE CALLED THE HONEST LAWYER OR THE FAIR CASTAWAY

Nearly a half century ago an event occurred of so singular and mysterious a character as to have become for many years the theme of wonder and speculation in the locality where it transpired.

One summer day a richly equipped carriage, driven by a jaunty young coachman, and containing an austere looking but fashionably dressed elderly man, a pale young lady and a female attendant, drove up to the door of a young physician in one of the interior villages of New Hampshire; and, after a long private consultation with the doctor, the man left the young lady and her attendant in the family of the former and immediately left town, without disclosing — except in part to the Dr., and his wife, perhaps, under injunctions of secrecy, his name, or residence, or those of the females he had left in charge of the doctor to remain as boarders or patients as appearances seemed to indicate. And as the stranger females, the Doctor and his wife were all equally reticent about the affair, the names, family residence of the parties thus arriving, and circumstances which led to the movement remained for nearly 20 years a profound secret. In a few weeks after her arrival the young lady was delivered of a fine female infant which was nursed by the young mother and her attendant, nearly a year; when the same elderly gentleman with the same carriage and driver returned and took away both the females, compelling the mother to leave her child in charge of the Doctor, who let it be understood he had taken it to bring up; receiving for so doing, as was believed from his suddenly improved circumstances, a very liberal allowance in money. This allowance it was also believed was made no less to pay the Doctor for the expense of keeping the child

than for keeping the secret of all that related to her parentage and circumstances of her birth, which was supposed to be an unfortunate or disgraceful episode in the history of some proud, aristocratic family, who resided in one of the neighboring cities, and who had taken this step to conceal the stain, which otherwise might rest on the family escutcheon.

The Doctor kept the child till she was seven or eight years old, when though he was thought to have received another large sum of money, he carried her off and gave her to the Shakers; and then he soon sold out, settled up all his business and moved away to some place which he contrived should be never definitely ascertained. In the meanwhile the child who proved an unusually promising child soon escaped from the Shakers by waylaying a farmer who had come to the Shaker village, and was on his way home, and by finally inducing him to let her live in his family, which, after a contest with the Elders of the establishment, he did and adopted her as a daughter. And thus she remained a member of his family till she was 18 or 19 years old without knowing anything of her parentage, or even her name, when events occurred which resulted in bringing what had so long remained a mystery, to light.

It then appeared that a retired merchant, who had made a great fortune in one of the cities, had an only daughter and sole heir. His name was Joseph Estabrook, and, counting several rich and distinguished ancestors of that name, and having great family pride, he at length became a proud and haughty aristocrat; and therefore sought to marry his daughter to a young man of wealth and high connections of the name of Bartlett. But the daughter rebelled against the match and entered into a secret engagement of marriage with a poor but promising young man of the neighborhood named Charles Mayo. This intimacy being soon discovered by the father, he drove the young man from his house, and forbade his daughter ever more to have anything to do with him, or even see him under the determined threat of disinheriting her if she disobeyed and refused to marry Bartlett. But Susan, the daughter, and her lover Mayo found means to meet in a neighboring town and were secretly married, but agreed never

to let the marriage be known till the father changed or died, and brave all consequences in carrying it out, to avoid the fate of the threatened disinheriting of the girl.

But the consequences of the clandestine marriage soon became visible, and great was the commotion in the family. But she resolutely refused to disclose the name of the father of the expected child, and took pains to turn all suspicion from her husband, the true father. Mr. Estabrook being thus misled and supposing the expected child to be illegitimate, fathered by some male servant, or low neighbor, at the inducement of Susan in revenge for the treatment her lover & herself had received, or as a desperate resort to get rid of marrying Bartlett, carried her off to the village in the interior of New Hampshire, and left her in the family of a young Doctor in the manner before described, and at the end of the year, came after her leaving the child with the Doctor, making provision for its support, &c, and then taking the mother back & getting her settled in a neighboring village where, with some meager allowance for her support, she lived for some months in the greatest privacy (excluded from all intercourse with her father and his family) when she got a place of governess abroad & remained till her child was 18 years old. Her husband, who soon after his marriage, went on a voyage to China, and was captured by pirates & long kept in captivity, did not return for 19 years & some years before her husband's return Mr. Estabrook died having made two successive wills — the first making good his threat of disinheriting his daughter by willing to a selfish & heartless nephew by the name of Wm. Estabrook, all his property except a valuable farm in New Hampshire, which he willed to his daughter's child if alive and to be found, and made the nephew trustee of the bequest to look her up and deliver her the property if found surviving at the age of 18. The second will, which was made near his death, and under the compunctions of a goading conscience, bequeathed the whole property except a small legacy to the nephew, equally to his discarded daughter and her doubly discarded child. This last will made without the knowledge of the nephew, was entrusted to the care of the intriguing Ann Bishop, who had acted as attendant

and nurse of Susan, the year of her banishment in New Hampshire, and who had kept in favor with Mr. Estabrook and witnessed the will, to be made public after the testator's death. But the nephew getting a hint of the making of this 2d will bought up Ann Bishop, who soon made the former believe she had burnt the instrument. But instead of destroying, she secreted, and kept the instrument, with the idea of some day making a new and more advantageous bargain with Susan or her daughter, at least should the nephew fail to carry out his stipulations conditioned for her keeping the secret.

And it was his failure to do this, and to carry out another stipulation made with Timothy Witters, the coachman before named, who had witnessed both Wills, which led them to combine and convey such hints to the Castaway, Alice, the child of the testator's discarded daughter, as finally led to the unfolding the whole mystery and fraud, the restoration to all their natural rights both the injured mother and the Castaway daughter Alice, and, as Chs. Mayo the legal husband of the mother returned during the surprising developments & proved his marriage thus entirely removing all the supposed stains on the character of the mother, now also returned, and on the birth of the daughter, the whole happy issue having been brought about by the talents and exertions of Henry Conrad, the Honest young lawyer who had settled in Lake Village, where Alice was born as already described, and who married her, having, without the least idea of her rights or prospects long before become her accepted lover.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

1 Doctor Tindall, the sordid, selfish man who cheated the wrong doer [and] gave away the child.

2 Joseph Estabrook, the proud, aristocratic father who discarded his daughter.

3 Susan Estabrook, the injured daughter.

4 Ann Bishop, the cunning, plausible but unscrupulous nurse &c.

5 Timothy Witters, the droll but shrewd coachman & confidential servant of Mr. Estabrook.

6 Charles Mayo, the secret husband of Susan & father of Alice.

7 William Estabrook, the heartless nephew & claiming heir.

8 John Wakeley, the Foster father of Alice.

9 Mrs. Sarah Wakeley, the Foster mother of Alice.

10 Henry Conrad, the Honest Lawyer & Hero of the Story.

11 Alice Mayo (as her name proves to be), the Fair Castaway or Heroine.

CHAPTER I

I HAVE a very curiously eventful tale to relate; and I may as well take the straight-forward course and begin at the beginning.

That beginning was involved in an event which occurred about forty years ago, in a small, thrifty, white village, which was situated in the interior of New Hampshire on a beautiful stream of water, which, issuing from a lake a few miles above, came dancing down in many a glittering cascade. All the swiftly rushing torrent, after supplying the inhabitants with an abundant water-power, found a comparative rest in the opening valley below. In a central part of this village stood a neat cottage building, which was occupied by a young physician, whose family consisted of himself, his wife and a young child. He was apparently about thirty years of age, of rather small stature, very commonplace features, inexpressive countenance and reserved manners. He had been settled in the village about two years, having come there for the purpose from the vicinity of one of the Atlantic cities, it was said, though nothing certain seemed to be known about it; for Dr. Tindal was what is called a close-mouthed man, and never disclosed to either friend or foe anything about his affairs, whether of the past or the present. Owing to his ungenial disposition and the competition of other physicians of the village or vicinity, which he was compelled to encounter, his practice was quite limited; and it was believed by those who had the best opportunities for obtaining an

DANIEL PIERCE THOMPSON

In his old age

insight into his domestic affairs, that he found considerable difficulty in meeting his current expenses from the profits of his profession. But however that might have been, it was evident from his despondent air and anxious looks, that he was anything but satisfied with his position and professional prospects.

But an unforeseen event was at hand, which was destined to remove all cause for any immediate anxieties he might have felt on account of any apprehended uncertainties of a comfortable livelihood, at least, for his family.

One day as the Doctor was at work in his garden adjoining the house, a costly looking carriage, containing two females and a male inside, and a well dressed driver outside, drove up to the door; when a rather elderly gentleman put his head out of the carriage window, and addressing the Doctor's wife, who happened to be sitting in the door-way, enquired, if that was the residence of Dr. Tindall; and if so, whether the Doctor was at home?

The Doctor, hearing his name mentioned, now promptly came forward, and, avowing himself to be the person in question, enquiringly awaited the pleasure of the questioner.

"If you are Dr. Tindall," said the gentleman, now getting out of the carriage, and, by his rich dress and general appearance, making it obvious that he was a man of more than ordinary consequence, "if you are the Doctor Tindal, who has been recommended to me, I wish to have a little confidential conversation with you."

"Certainly, Sir," responded the Doctor with a look of mingled surprise and curiosity — "whatever you

may please to communicate shall be safe in my keeping. But walk into the house, Sir."

"No," rejoined the other — "we will take a turn in your garden, and the ladies, in the meanwhile, will remain in the carriage till the result of our conference is ascertained."

With this the two retired into the garden, when by common consent seemingly, the Doctor instinctively acting from natural secretiveness, and the stranger from a wish to avoid observation, they passed round to the rear of the house and out of the view of all who might be coming from either direction along the street.

They were absent nearly an hour; when they reappeared, each wearing the decided, satisfied air of men, who have concluded some acceptable bargain, and the Doctor especially appearing particularly gratified. While the Doctor hastened into the house to apprise his wife of the arrangement that had been so satisfactorily concluded, the stranger gentleman proceeded to the carriage and threw open the door, bringing into full view the two females to which allusion has already been made. One was a delicate looking young lady, of perhaps twenty, whose habiliments and every appearance betokened her as coming from one of the wealthier classes of society. She was very fair, but very pale; while an expression of deep sadness overspread her interesting countenance. The other was a comely, middle aged female, but evidently of a different class. Her dress and general appearance, indeed, when contrasted with the former, seemed to indicate between them the relation of mistress and maid, or rather, perhaps, of nurse and advisory companion.

"Well," said the gentleman addressing the females in a sort of constrained air — "the arrangement is all made; and everything understood; so this, of course, is to be your home for the present; and if you will now get out of the carriage, I will conduct you into the house."

The gentleman then, after directing the driver to take the team to the tavern for refreshments for himself and horses, led the silent and passive females into the house, and briefly introduced them, the younger one simply by the name of Susan, and the elder as Mrs. Bishop, to the Doctor and his wife, the latter of whom now conducted them to the room designed for their exclusive use. The gentleman then held another private conversation with the Doctor, at the close of which he handed the latter an unnamed amount of money, as an advance for the services he was expected to perform. After this the gentleman, without again seeing the ladies he had brought with him, or appearing to take any thought of them, except to suggest that their trunks, which the driver had taken from the coach, should be at once taken to their room, departed for the tavern; when, ordering up his coach, he immediately started on his way homeward.

The Doctor's two boarders, or protegees, or whatever they should be called, soon became so well domesticated as to appear at their ease and entirely resigned to their new situation. They, however, confined themselves to their room, except in their walks in the garden and in their attendance at the daily meals. But their conversation at the table was so constrained and guarded that not a single word was ever dropped by either of them, from which it could be even inferred from whence they came, or why they had been brought to this remote vil-

lage under appearances so singular and with such evident desire to be as little known as possible. Even the family name of the young lady was never mentioned; and she was called by her companion by no other name than that by which she had first been announced — simply Susan. And the Doctor and his wife, whatever the former might have known, followed the example, and always addressed the sad and silent young lady by [the] same appellation. But as taciturn and sparing of remarks as she generally was, enough could be noted in her conversation to show that she had been well educated; while her manners and general appearance clearly indicated that she had been tenderly reared and in every probability connected, as a daughter or less intimate tie, with some wealthy and aristocratic family. And yet, at the same time, her deep dejection, the manner in which she was brought there and all the attending circumstances, quite as clearly pointed her out as either the victim of some very afflictive misfortune, or some cruel persecution.

This event, with the air of mystery that attended it, as might naturally be expected, occasioned no little talk and speculation in the village, which, though numbering many hundred inhabitants, was yet of a size that generally admitted of everybody's knowing all about every other body's business. And the village gossips were all agog to know who the new-comers were, where they came from and what were their characters and position in life. They consequently let no opportunity slip of besieging Doctor Tindal, when they met him, with either direct or indirect enquiries on the subject. But the most they were ever able to make out of him, was, that one of his boarders was a young lady in delicate health, who

had been placed under his professional care, and the other her attendant. He never, he said, pryed into the private affairs of his patients, even to the ascertaining their names and usual residence, much less their social standing.

Foiled in this they bethought them of the Doctor's wife; and for the next two or three weeks Mrs. Tindall received more calls than she had been honored with for years. But they were scarcely more successful with the cautious wife than they had been with the close-mouthed husband. The stranger ladies never appeared when anybody called; and Mrs. Tindall professed to know nothing about them except that they were very orderly, and evidently very respectable ladies. In a village like this, however, subjects of interest will be discussed in proportion to the doubt and mystery that hangs over them, notes will be compared, conjectures made, and what is deemed the most probable conjecture will soon be reported as the truth. It was at any rate so in this instance; and the report, in a short time became general that Dr. Tindall's young boarder or patient was rapidly approaching the state of maternity, but whether as the wife of some absent husband such as a sea-Captain as some thought, or as "a mother and yet no wife," as others less charitably conjectured, no one pretended to decide. And for once public report proved to be correct. In about a month after her arrival, the young lady was delivered of a fine and healthy female infant, which rapidly developed into a most promising and beautiful child.

It is often the greatest of blessings to a young woman, laboring under severe trials of the heart or other deep afflictions with the generally attendant dangerous de-

spondency, to become a mother. For although the cause of such despondency may still remain, yet the feeling of maternity, which always opens a new and strongly gushing fountain of emotions, will generally either wholly overpower the ordinary griefs or so much so as to render them harmless to one who otherwise might become the victim of a fatal physical decline or hopeless insanity. And it was so in the present instance. Susan became a devoted and assiduous mother; while with each succeeding day's occupation in her tender and heart-engrossing employment, her brow lightened up, and she gradually assumed something like an air of cheerfulness and contentment.

Nor was the effect of this happy event scarcely less visible on the Doctor. For in the birth of this healthy and promising child, he had, as he had reason to know, a guaranty of the prolongation of the sojourn of his profitable boarders, which he would never have had if the infant had died at, or soon after its birth. The Doctor, indeed, had become a different man ever since the advent of these mysterious strangers, having divested himself of much of his former forbidding reserve and anxious, careworn appearance. And now he grew still more lively and social, cheerfully paid up all his little debts, which had before been wrung from him as if under some painful compulsion — purchased little luxuries for his table that never before found their way into his family, improved himself in dress, procured new furniture, and made several improvements about his house and other buildings.

Thus, without alteration, except in the growth of the child and in the establishment of the health of the mother, everything relating to the Doctor's protegees

went on to a period lacking but two or three weeks of one year from their arrival; when the former, to the surprise of the mother, began to suggest that the child should be weaned, and soon after became so persistent in urging the measure, which he contended the health of both the child and the mother demanded, that she yielded to the request but not without great reluctance and some undefined suspicions that this course was urged for other reasons than those that had been avowed. And the event showed that those suspicions were not groundless.

One day, just about a year from [the] time she was brought to this place, as the young mother stood at her chamber window with her loved and lovely babe in her arms, her eyes fell on an approaching carriage, which her eager, riveted glances soon enabled her to identify; and she turned pale, trembled violently and staggering away from the window, sunk helpless into a chair.

"Why, what is the matter, Susan?" exclaimed the woman Bishop who was sewing on the opposite side of the room.

"He has come!" gasped the mother involuntarily closely clasping her child as if there was danger of its being at that moment torn from her arms.

Mrs. Bishop rose, went to the window and looking attentively a moment said, with a look of assumed surprise.

"Yes, the same carriage we came in, the same horses, the same driver, and inside sits a man. There, I caught a glimpse of him then — yes, it is him, sure enough."

"Mrs. Bishop, you knew he was coming after me," reproachfully exclaimed the troubled Susan, who had been keenly noting the countenance of the other.

"Now what on earth should make you think so, Susan?"

"Why, your looks, notwithstanding your feigned surprise, show that it was nothing more than you expected; and besides that, you joined the Doctor in compelling me to wean baby; when you knew what a comfort it would have been to me to have nursed it yet months longer. Yes, I see now, you have been in *his* secrets, and acting *his* pleasure, instead of mine as I had blindly supposed."

"You are too suspicious, Susan. But supposing it was as you seem to imagine, whose money pays me for my services; and whose money provides and is to provide for you and your child? And should not one who does all this be consulted or rather obeyed in his commands? But hush! He has driven up to the door, and I hear him enquiring for me. I must go down."

"O, beg of him, Mrs. Bishop, do beg of him not to separate me and my child."

"I will name your wish, Susan, but fear it will be useless."

With this the woman hastened down stairs and outdoors to the carriage window; when she was stiffly saluted by her employer, who said,

"In the first place how about Susan and her child?"

"They are quite well, Sir."

"Has the child been weaned and got fairly over it?"

"I may say yes to both questions, though Susan stood out quite strongly at first about weaning the child at present, and would not have come into it but for my help."

"All right, then; so you will see that your trunks are all packed tonight. I shall drive back and put up at the tavern. You will tell the Doctor, who has gone a short distance out of town to see a patient his wife says, to call on me at the tavern when he gets home. I shall call for you and Susan after breakfast tomorrow morning when we shall start immediately for home."

"And the child?"

"Doctor Tindall and his wife are to keep the child. And look you, Mrs. Bishop, that child, or the fact that there ever was one, is never to be named, after we leave this place. One thing more, has the name of our family been uttered, or even guessed at in this place?"

"No."

"It never will be then. Even the Doctor don't know it, unless you have told him for our correspondence has been carried on through a third person. Susan's mouth is sealed, I think; and as for you, I shall settle a small yearly sum on you, to be stopped the very day you disclose this family secret."

There are silent agonies of the heart which language can never adequately describe. I shall therefore undertake not to tell what distress the young mother endured during the ensuing, to her, long and sleepless night, in view of a final separation from her child, which she had felt to be the only object now that rendered life supportable.

The next morning she appeared at the breakfast table dressed for her journey, but, without tasting a morsel of food, sat, during the meal, with watery eyes, mutely listening for the sound of the dreaded carriage. And scarcely was the breakfast over, before that carriage was at the door. The obsequious Mrs. Bishop ran out

and announced that they would be ready in a moment for the starting; and then hurrying back, hastily completed the remaining preparations, and urged the reluctant Susan forward to the carriage door. But as she let go the arm of the persecuted young woman, preparatory to helping her into the carriage, the latter rushed wildly back into the house and up to her room where her child had been left. The old gentleman bent a stern, rebuking look upon Mrs. Bishop, who thereupon instantly turned and went in pursuit of her charge, and in a few minutes she reappeared leading, or rather dragging back to the carriage her victim, who now passively approached with a countenance convulsed with grief and sobbing as if her heart would break.

"What was it all about?" said the man impatiently.

"O, nothing," replied Mrs. Bishop, "only the silly creature must needs go to bid her baby a second farewell."

"Well, into the carriage with you all, then," rejoined the man. "There: and now, driver, be off before we have another fuss."

With this the carriage rolled away, and no one of that strangely contrasted company within, were ever again seen in the smiling little village of Lakeville.

The next half dozen years of the period covered by our tale may be almost passed over in a paragraph.

Little Alice, for so had her mother named her, grew up a bright and intelligent, as well as a beautiful child. The difference between her and the Doctor's child of the same sex, and nearly the same age, was, both in body and mind, so marked as to attract the notice of all, and cause the parents to sigh over the contrast. By the

time she was five or six years old, being found remarkably correct and appreciative in all ordinary matters of business, she began to be employed both by the Doctor and his wife in going of errands to the stores, or other places in the village where anything was wanted, any word to be sent, or anything of the kind to be done, and wherever she appeared, she was sure to attract attention and awaken a peculiar interest by her unusual beauty, her sunny smiles and unexpected intelligence. People would even strive to detain her to look into her sparkling countenace and listen to her sprightly remarks and replies. In a short time, indeed, she became what might justly be called the pet of the village. Her infantile education, in the meantime, had not been neglected. She was allowed to go to school at least six months in the year, and all the opportunities for learning thus afforded her, were so well improved that she was soon found outstripping all other pupils in the rate of the progress she made in her studies. And this, with her diligence and correct deportment, made her the pet also and favorite of her teachers.

"And thus her lovely mind could culture well repay
And more engaging grew from pleasing day to day."

Thus, without any essential alteration, continued the relations existing between the promising little Castaway, Alice, the Doctor's family, and all others to whom she had become known until she was seven years of age. An event then occurred, however, which was to work an entire change in her eventful destiny. One morning, about this time, Doctor Tindall was noticed bringing out his team and making preparations which denoted that he was about starting on a journey of con-

siderable length. He was then seen carrying out a small trunk, followed by Alice, whom he placed on the waggon at his side, and drove off with her out of town. Three days afterwards he returned alone, but where he had been, and in what manner he had disposed of Alice, he was careful not to disclose, though, from the remarks he threw out, he left it to be inferred that she had been taken to her relatives. This, however, did not satisfy the closest observers, who, feeling convinced that the Doctor must have received large sums of money for adopting the child, as they supposed he had, were not without their suspicions, that he had violated his trust and disposed of her in some way which redounded neither to his honesty nor humanity.

Soon after this, the Doctor disposed of all his visible property, settled up all his business and removed with his family from the town, but to what place, as the same reserve and mystery which had always characterized him was still maintained, nobody had the means of knowing.

CHAPTER II

THE next scene of our story opens at one of the Shaker establishments of New Hampshire, then in quite a flourishing condition, and numbering between one and two hundred adult members, besides a dozen or so children and youth, who under various circumstances, had been brought there from the neighboring country and given to, or at least placed under the care and tutelage of this unique and singular brotherhood.

It was on a pleasant autumnal day, some months after the event last named in the preceding chapter, that a farmer named Wakeley living fifteen or twenty miles distant arrived at the Shaker establishment with a load of broom corn for the Family, as the members of the establishment called themselves, in payment for a quantity of rakes, scythe snaths & other farming tools which he had purchased [in] the spring for himself and neighbors. While he was engaged in unloading and placing the corn in the place designated by the Shakers he noticed a little girl of a beautiful and singularly expressive face hanging round and wistfully watching his motions. Being of kindly and genial disposition, and feeling much attracted by the child's appearance which was so different from anything he was expecting at that place he spoke encouragingly when she approached him, after looking suspiciously around to see that she was not watched, and promptly answered such trivial questions as he began to ask her. And soon growing assured by his kind and pleasant manner, she in turn

plied him with many questions respecting his home, his family and the road he came & when he was going to start on his return home. Though rather surprised at her rapid catechism, he good naturedly answered all her questions, supposing she was actuated only by childish curiosity.

"But what is your name, my smart little girl?" asked Wakeley after a pause. "You haven't told me that."

"O my name is Alice, Sir."

"Alice what?"

"I don't quite know, Sir. I lived with Dr. Tindal of Lakeville before he brought me here; and I used to call him father and Mrs. Tindal mother, but other folks told me they were not my father and mother."

"And did n't the Doctor or his wife ever tell you whose child you were?"

"No, Sir, they did not, and nobody else did; so I don't know. If I did I would tell you."

"That was strange. But how came you to leave them and find your way here?"

"The Doctor brought me here, and said it was a nice good place to live, and told me to stay here till he came for me. But he has not come yet, and I don't believe he will, do you?"

"I don't know. But didn't you love Dr. Tindal and his wife?"

"Not much — not very much. I wish I had a good father and mother to love — some such man as you — for I think you must be a good, kind man. O I know you be."

The Head man of the Shakers now approaching, the little girl instantly fell back and disappeared, when Wakeley proceeded to complete his business with the

former. And having thus accomplished his object in coming to the establishment, and partaken some refreshment, he leisurely took his way homeward.

After travelling a mile or two, at a very slow pace, for the afternoon was quite warm, and the road was considerably ascending, he, in casting his eyes along the way ahead, noted a small girl tripping briskly forward in the same direction in which he was himself travelling. Occasionally she looked back towards him over her shoulder and then quickened her pace, as if intent on maintaining her distance from him. The movements of the little traveller having somewhat excited his curiosity, he thought he would hasten his pace so as to overtake her and give her a ride if she desired it. Accordingly he put his team into a brisk trot, which soon brought him up with her.

"Would n't you like to ride, my little girl?" said Wakeley bringing his team to a stand as she turned out of the road, though barely enough to keep clear of the waggon wheels.

"Yes, Sir," she hesitatingly replied, turning towards the other and disclosing the animated, though now anxious countenance of little Alice. "Yes, Sir, I want to go with you very much, and I thought [of] asking you if I might, but was almost afraid to."

"Why, you are the little girl I saw, and had so much chat with at the Shakers this forenoon, but are you going much further? If you are, you will have a long walk on your return, won't you?"

"O I am not going to return. I have left the Shakers for good. I cannot live there any longer."

"Did they know of your leaving?"

"No, Sir, I suppose not."

"But they will follow and claim you as belonging to them, won't they?"

"I do not know. But if they do, I shan't go back, unless they tie and force me back, and then I shall run away again."

"I hardly know what to do about you," responded Wakeley, hesitating and beginning to look serious. "I fear I shall not be justified in helping you off under the circumstances."

"O do let me go with you," said Alice, with starting tears, "do, O Sir, do let me go home with you and live in your family. I will be as good as I can, and work all the time for you, if you will take me home and let me be your little girl. I have no father or mother in the world as I know of — nobody to love me or care for me. O Sir, do let me go with you. It will make me so very happy."

And so for the next ten minutes she continued to plead with the farmer, midst tears and sobs, with that touching eloquence of childhood which every benevolent heart finds so hard to resist. At any rate, the kind heart of Wakeley melted under its influence. "Well, well, my little girl," replied he, soothingly interrupting her in the outpourings of her prayers and promises. "Perhaps the Shakers will not come after you, or, if they do, perhaps I can make some terms with them for giving you up. At all events, you shall go home with me and become one of my family for the present. So wipe away your tears and jump up here into the waggon; for I must move on, and at a more rapid rate, else I shall be late in reaching home."

About sunset they arrived at Wakeley's neat and comfortable farmhouse; where the latter conducted the

sprightly little stranger into the house, introduced her to his family, consisting of his wife, his daughter Lucy, about the age of Alice, and two younger children of different sexes, and then briefly explained the circumstances under which he had brought her home.

Thus the little castaway became installed in her new home. But was it to be a permanent one to her? We shall see. Mr. Wakeley, after retiring for the night held a long conversation with his wife on the question of yielding to the entreaties of Alice to be taken into the family and make it her permanent home. And he was gratified to find that she had already become [as] much prepossessed with the little girl as he had been himself from the outset; and though they had as many children as they wanted; yet so strongly were their sympathies moved toward the orphan child, and so great their repugnance at the thought of seeing one so beautiful and promising doomed to the strange, ungenial, half slave life, which she could only expect to realize among the Shakers, they at length both resolved that they would adopt her as one of the family, provided they could successfully evade, or resist the claim of the Shakers, should their leaders, as they probably soon would, search her out and insist on carrying her back. This being settled, they then agreed on the course they would unitedly and severally adopt to rescue her, if need be, from a home which was evidently so revolting to her, and one to which they believed she had, through some sinister purpose been consigned.

In pursuance of this plan Mr. Wakeley, early the next morning, saddled his horse and started off for the Office of the Judge of Probate, about a dozen miles distant, leaving his wife to manage, should there be occasion for

it, her part of the affair at home. And by way of providing for the contingence of a visit that day from some of the Shaker leaders which she and her husband believed likely to occur, Mrs. Wakeley, soon after her husband's departure, sent her daughter and Alice off to the family of a relative, living two miles distant, to remain there through the day, so that should the Shakers come she might evade their demands, for that day at least, when more effectual means to defeat their purpose would perhaps be found. This as the event turned out was a wise precaution; for, as had been anticipated, early that afternoon, two Shaker leaders rode up to the door and enquired for the little truant girl as they termed her, stating that she had been seen the evening before riding that way in Mr. Wakeley's wagon, and they therefore had little doubt but that she would be found at his house.

Mrs. Wakeley was not a woman to tell a falsehood, or practice any outright deception, and, finding Alice had been seen on the road with her husband, so that the simple statement that she was not there, would not probably prove satisfactory, she concluded she would not attempt to affect ignorance about the matter, she therefore frankly admitted that her husband brought such a child home with him the night before, and that they had kept her all night, but that she went away in the morning.

"Which way did she go?" asked the leader.

"I did not watch her when she left the house and cannot therefore safely say," replied the lady with a slight twinge of conscience.

"That seems strange," rejoined the leader, with a doubtful look. "Thee must have some idea about it — thee can guess, can't thee?"

"Yes," she returned, "I might guess she had gone back the way she came, or I might guess she had gone forward, but I should not be justified in saying she did either; for I did not see her start."

"Is she not here, somewhere hid about the house?" asked the other with a dissatisfied air.

"No, Sir, she is not," promptly answered the lady.

"But may she not have hid herself away in the barns, or in the orchard, or somewhere about the farm?" persevered the man.

"It may be so, of course," said the former, "but I should not think it at all probable; yet if you think otherwise you are at full liberty not only to search the house and barns but the whole farm over."

"I think we will take a look into the barns and about the farm; for the girl belongs to us and we must have her back," said the leader, rising with a suspicious air, and going out with his companion.

They were absent, peering and spying about the barns barns, out-houses, orchard, clumps of bushes and all other possible places of concealment, in quest of the little fugitive, more than an hour, when Mrs. Wakeley beheld them on their return from their vain search approaching the house; and she trembled with apprehension at the thought of the renewed trial she expected they would compell her to undergo in further, and perhaps closer catechisms concerning her secret knowledge of the whereabouts of Alice. And she was not disappointed in her expectations; for they had no sooner entered, as they did with sullen and vexed expressions of countenance, than they commenced a course of closer questioning, which greatly taxed her prudence and ingenuity in furnishing answers, which should not disclose

what she was so anxious to conceal, or create suspicions of the true state of the case; when, to her great relief, her husband arrived, and entering the house exchanged the ordinary salutations with the Shakers, whom he appeared to be not wholly surprised in finding there.

"We came here in search of a small girl, who belongs to our Family, and who strangely disappeared about the time thee left our village yester-afternoon," at once commenced the leader in a censorious tone.

"But you would not intimate that I enticed the girl away from your establishment, would you?" asked Wakeley rather sharply.

"Nay, friend Wakeley, as we would like to call thee, we, at first, did not believe that of thee; but when we found the girl was missing soon after thy departure, and learned moreover that thee was seen talking familiarly with her there, and especially when we ascertained she was seen riding with thee in thy waggon on thy way home, we feared thee must have in some way induced her to leave us."

"You were entirely mistaken, then. I did, it is very true, chat with the girl when she came round me, while I was unloading at your establishment; but there was not one word said about her leaving you, either by me or her; nor had I the least idea that she had any such intention, till I overtook her after travelling several miles on my way home, and she manifested a wish to ride. I then perceived it was the same little girl I had spoken with at your place, and questioned her closely. But after finding she had left you without your consent or knowledge, I, instead of saying anything to induce her to persevere in her course, advised her to return. And it was not till after I discovered her utter repug-

nance to return, and her determination to go on whether I carried her or not, that I consented to let her ride, and then stay with us for the night."

"Then why did thee not keep her for us?"

"She was here, I supposed, when I left home this morning."

"But thy wife says she left here this morning."

"It must have been after I left then."

"It may be so. But thee may have seen her, or heard of her on thy way back."

"I have done neither."

"Then, as we suspected, she must be somewhere in the vicinity, and if so will thee promise to keep her, and deliver her up when we call, as we shall probably within a day or two?"

"I cannot promise that. To deliver her up to go back, with her present feelings, would be a crueller task than either myself or wife would be willing to perform."

"Why should you not give her up? She belongs to us. She was given to us by Dr. Tindal of Lake Village to remain with us without limit or condition."

"That may be, but are you sure Dr. Tindall had any legal right to give away that girl to you?"

"Yea. She was born in his house, always lived with him and was placed entirely at his disposal."

"But not to give away to others. I have been to Lake Village today, and learned all that you can know, and more too. It was doubtless contracted between her friends and the Doctor, that he should bring her up, and act the foster-father to her, and it is equally certain that he received a very liberal sum of money for doing this. But instead of that, he gave her to you, and went off to parts unknown with the money intended for her support

and education, and thus forfeited all right to control her destiny as a foster-father. Any other right he never possessed; for as I have also ascertained he was never appointed her guardian."

"Thee appears to have busied thyself very much in whatcan not concern any but ourselves, I must say. But suppose what you say is mainly true, I should like to have thee tell us who now has so good a right to control the girl as we?"

"I have, and a better one."

"You?"

"Yes. I have this day been appointed her guardian, and here is my letter of guardianship and authority to keep or otherwise provide her a home. But that home will never be your establishment."

"We shall contest the point with thee. We shall hunt till we find her, and then take her back."

"And make yourselves liable for prosecution for abduction?"

"But surely thee would not take advantage of thy questionably obtained power?"

"I shall take advantage of it only for what I shall deem the child's good. But after hearing her history from herself, as far as she knows it, and all that is known of her at Lake Village, I became satisfied that her relations, whoever they were, and however great a wrong they had done her, never intended she should be placed in any Shaker family, and having seen her utter aversion to return to you, I determined she should have a legal protector, and so volunteered to become her guardian. I shall, therefore, take her under protection, and the wisest and kindest thing you can do, is peaceably to acquiesce and not annoy her by coming here after her

again; for I will plainly tell you that all attempts to recover her will be useless, and, for you, worse than useless."

"We will not acquiesce. We will hunt her up. We will talk with her; for we don't know but she would now wish to go back."

"Well, we here all know what she wishes, and if she returns to us, as you perhaps rightly think she will, I shall not hesitate to do my duty in protecting her and giving her a home in my family."

The balked Shakers, on this exhibition of firmness and determination in Mr. Wakeley, now sullenly withdrew and returned home never to repeat their visit.

Within two hours, Alice and her new found friend Lucy returned to Mr. Wakeley's. And when the former learned all that had transpired in her absence — that a battle had been fought in her behalf and won, and that Mr. Wakeley's house was now to be her home, she grew wild with delight, ran to Mr. Wakeley and then to his wife, kissing each in turn and saying —

"Now, you will let me call you father, and you mother, and you both will call me your daughter, won't you?"

"Yes, if you would like it best so," kindly responded the visibly touched couple.

"O, then, I am so thankful and so happy!" exclaimed Alice, again running from one to the other and repeating her warm and grateful caresses, and with tears and sobs receiving those of her now confessed foster parents in return.

The little castaway had thus at length found a home; and, what was more, that home was one of the best, for one situated as she was, that could have fallen to her

lot. Both Mr. Wakeley and his wife, besides their large benevolence and uniformly kind and gentle manners, were a well-educated and unusually intelligent couple, and finely calculated to guide and train up well and wisely, a child of the active intellect and warm heart of Alice, and at the same time secure her implicit obedience and lasting affections. They gave her every privilege, and every advantage they accorded to their own daughter for education and improvement of mind and manners; and by her progress in her studies, in which she still continued to distance all her competitors, and by her growing graces, well did she reward them for all the care and kindness they had bestowed upon her. But it is not our purpose to follow the yearly developing of the beautiful character, the expanding mind and personal attractions of the discarded child; for our tale now leads us to make the long stride in time of nearly a dozen years, when, all that we could say will be better demonstrated by the renewed introduction we shall give her in other scenes, and in another stage of action, in which she was destined to take a prominent part.

CHAPTER III

THE half score of years that had now elapsed since the reader was made to part with Lake Village, where the singular events narrated in our opening chapter, occurred, had wrought a great change in the appearance of the place. The population, in that time, had nearly doubled, manufactures had been established, new mechanics shops sprung up, new stores opened, society much improved, and new professional men introduced.

Among the last mentioned class, was a young man of the legal profession, who had received a good classical and legal education in different older towns and come here, a few years previously to the present time, and made this comparatively new, but very flourishing village, his permanent place of settlement, where, in a conspicuous locality on the principal street, stood his snug little office building, with its neatly lettered sign over the door, inscribed "Henry Conrad, Attorney at Law." He was a fine looking young man, of about twenty five, very comely in form and feature, with a clear, open, genial countenance and prepossessing manners. But young as he was he had already gained an enviable reputation, both as a citizen and a lawyer. With the poet, Pope, he had, on commencing his professional career, breathed the unusual prayer —

"O, give me honest fame or give me none";

and his prayer had been answered in bringing him a reputation which was a peculiarly well-deserved and honest one.

The profession of the law is a noble one if worthily practiced. There are doubtless, in this profession, many strong temptations to pursue wrong courses for the sake of getting business, by engaging for clients with little or no preliminary examination into the merits or demerits of their causes. When men go to a lawyer for assistance they often do so blinded by a desire for revenge or by over weening self interest. And there is one class of lawyers, who without any intention of doing anything wrong, readily fall in with the one-sided stories of such clients, and engage for them without question, but often only to find themselves deceived, and enlisted in an unjust cause, when too late to back out from it. And there is another class — a less numerous one, we hope, who neither know nor care whether the cause is just or unjust so that they can get engaged to manage it. It is such lawyers who bring discredit on the profession. In regard to the former class, who are unwillingly led to engage in unjust causes, the fault is generally their own. By a little patient enquiry at the outset the demerits of such causes may be disclosed, and the dilemma avoided. And in respect to the latter class, who are as ready to engage on the wrong side as the right one, they deserve only the name of public mischief-makers and should be frowned down by every intelligent community. There is no more excuse for a lawyer to lie and be dishonest than for a farmer or mechanic. Neither necessity or true wisdom ever dictate it. A good cause needs no bolstering of falsehood to support it; and a bad one can never be made better or stronger by the use of it. The old trite but ever true maxim of "*Honesty is the best policy*" is just as applicable to the profession of the law as any other calling in life.

Upon all this Conrad had early reflected; and, aided by his naturally strong moral sense, and the correct moral training he had received from his worthy and intelligent parents, all these conclusions he had reached before entering his profession. And he accordingly resolved he would make the strictest honesty of purpose the guiding star of his practice, from which no prospect of immediate gain should ever tempt him to deviate, also further resolving, he would be *An Honest Lawyer* or none, or, in other words, if he could not make a living without dishonesty, lying, or false representations of any kind, he would quit the profession forever. This rule, however, he found on entering practice, not so easily to be maintained as he had imagined. By strictly observing it he found himself compelled to turn off full one half of those who applied to him for his professional assistance, either by declining to bring unjust suits, or by lending his aid in getting up false defenses to those which had justly been brought by others. Unexpected circumstances that occurred during the second year of his practice, however, brought him a large accession of business, and that too of the very kind in which he loved to engage. This was occasioned by the advent of a new and reckless lawyer, who was very eager for business, and seemed determined to have it at some rate or other, even if he had to turn in and help make it himself. Those who had been turned off by Conrad, now nearly all called on Chapin, for such was the new attorney's name, to obtain his opinion of the contemplated suits or defences in which the former had advised them not to engage. And to their great gratification they found the opinions of Conrad in every case directly over-ruled by Chapin, who could not conceive how an intelligent lawyer could en-

tertain such opinions, and who now found no difficulty on convincing them that they had both law and justice on their side. And the result was, that, within a few months, the village and surrounding country was stirred up into commotion and bitterness by a new crop of vexatious law-suits. To defend these suits Conrad was, as a matter of course, very generally called, and it is needless to say with what good will and earnestness he engaged in defending them. This brought him not only a plenty of legitimate business, but greatly increased his reputation as a lawyer. For in the defenses of all the suits so engendered, he was uniformly successful. So marked, indeed, was this result, that the public attention was turned on him with renewed favor and respect. But while Conrad was thus signally rewarded by the universal verdict of the public for the zeal, ability and success with which he defended his persecuted clients, his graceless opponent was as signally punished. So strongly, in short, was the public disapprobation manifested against him, for stirring up so much of what was now seen by all to be unnecessary and mischievous litigation, that, within two years from the time he opened his office in the village he was by the aversion with which he was by all classes regarded, and his consequent lack of employment, absolutely driven from the place, followed by the reproaches of all, his late deceived clients joining loudest in the general outcry.

After the departure of Chapin, his would-be rival from town, Conrad fell back into his old routine of practice. This was now, of course, not very extensive; but what he lost in business, he made up in the legal acquirements with which the study of his profession, now diligently pursued in all his leisure hours continued to

store his mind and thereby lay broader and firmer his foundation for future eminence. And this is what all young professional aspirants, in his situation should do, if they would attain to much excellence in their calling, and, indeed, it is the course that most of our most noted jurists have ever pursued. For we believe it will be generally found, on enquiry, that those who are eventually found occupying the highest positions in their profession have laid the real foundations of their success near the commencement of their careers in country villages, where the limited extent of their practice left much time for study without the excitements of city life to distract their attention. What is then and there read is generally well read, and well digested. But it is the golden opportunity which few so faithfully improve as did Henry Conrad.

But a train of events was now at hand, which was destined not only to greatly vary the usual monotony of his life, but to exercise an important influence in the shapings of his future destinies.

One day, during this peaceful period, as he sat in his office a stranger gentleman entered, and, with some commonplace remark about the weather, took a seat with the air of one who may have called on business, but with a hesitating manner which might indicate that he was not quite decided how he should proceed to disclose the objects of his visit. Perceiving this, Conrad threw a keen enquiring glance at him, and fell to studying his countenace as far as he could do so without going into a scrutiny that would infringe on good manners. He was well dressed; but the costly cloth of his habiliments, his massive gold watch-chain and other evidences of wealth that appeared about his person wholly failed to make

the impression which the wearer probably expected would be made by them on those he encountered. The impression indeed made on Conrad, at his first glance, was unfavorable, and every subsequent look at the newcomer, his poorly disguised superciliousness of manner, his strangely insincere cast of countenance and even the peculiar wolfish tones of his voice when he came to speak, but deepened the unfavorable impression. His features though regular enough were small, his head thin in front but bulgent in the rear, his complexion sandy, and his eyes of an uncertain color and of a whitish flashy appearance, which, as they unsteadily rolled in their sockets seemed to elude all inspection. He was about of the medium height and size and his age was evidently under thirty.

"You have quite a retired village here, eigh Sir," said he.

"Somewhat so perhaps, but nevertheless a very thrifty one," responded Conrad with a look that seemed to say, "you are starting some distance from the point you aim eventually to arrive at I suspect."

"May be in some sort," replied the other. "But pretty dry picking for lawyers, — eigh, Sir?"

"The business of my profession cannot, of course, be very large in so small a place as this," returned Conrad, still doubtful what the man would be driving at.

"Yes, limited enough, I should think; and you would like to extend it, eigh, Sir?" rejoined the former in a wheedling tone.

"Why, certainly," said Conrad, "I should not object to an increase of legitimate business."

"Legitimate!" exclaimed the man sneeringly. "*Any* business that brings a good round fee, is legitimate enough for most lawyers, eigh, Sir."

"Not with me, Sir," returned Conrad in a decided tone.

"O that is all fudge," replied the other with the same air. "You lawyers all talk in that strain at first. But to come right to the point I will say at once that I would like to retain you as my lawyer. And as the case is of importance to my interests and as I may have various other business to give to one who shall manage matters in the right way for me, I will at once offer you a retaining fee of One hundred dollars."

"But," said Conrad, interposing in a doubtful tone, "you have not told me anything of the character of the case you would intrust to my management."

"No," responded the other, with a cunning leer. "Accept my offered retainer, and engage for me, and I will then tell you enough for your present guidance. Will you take it?"

"No, I can never engage my services till I know whether they are to be employed for commendable objects," answered Conrad rebukingly. "Others may do so, but I will not."

"Others shall have the business then," coolly returned the stranger. "I had rather preferred to engage a lawyer living in this locality. But no matter; and as it is no use to prolong our talk, I will wish you a good day, Sir."

And so the Brown Tempter (for so, he having on a bright, brown coat, we will call him for want of his true name, which he had been careful not to disclose) rose and departed without uttering another word.

"A strange visitor!" soliloquised Conrad as his would-be client so unceremoniously left the office. "Aye, a very strange visitor with an equally strange errand. It

was certainly a tempting offer he made me. But for me to accept it in the dark, as he would have had me, it at least must have come from a far less suspicious personage than he appears to me to be: For as I read, the word rascal is palpably written in his very countenance, as well as clearly betrayed in his manner and even in the tones of his voice. And his errand, with what he revealed, and what he left to be suspected, was little calculated to lessen the unfavorable impression his looks created. His object cannot have been an honest one, else he would not have sought to put a padlock on my lips in shape of such a large retaining fee before he dare venture to disclose it. An honest man, with an honest purpose in view, would never have taken this course. No, never! And I did right in rejecting his offer. Some one is about to be made a victim of his designs, and living in this part of the country, as I infer. But he will not now have me for an instrument in doing his dirty work."

Such was the decision of Henry Conrad; and though apparently made at a great sacrifice of his personal interest, it was as wise as it was commendable — wiser, indeed, than he could have possibly foreseen as the sequel will show that this manly and conscientious act was destined to be the turning point of his fortunes for life.

The next day as Conrad was sitting alone in his office, and, as it singularly happened, was pondering upon the strange call he received the day before, as already related, an intelligent and gentlemanly appearing stranger, who was evidently a farmer, entered, and after a brief commonplace remark or two, announced his name as Wakeley, and the object of his visit to be to consult the

other in relation to the interests or supposed interests of a girl, or rather now young lady, who was now, and, for the last ten or twelve years had been, residing in his family, as his ward and adopted daughter, and who came to him under quite peculiar circumstances. He then proceeded to relate all that was known of the history of Alice, the fair castaway already made known to the reader, and concluded by remarking — "Now this castaway child evidently sprung from some wealthy and probably aristocratic family. But whether an illegitimate, or the issue of a match deemed by her relatives too derogatory to their position in life to be acknowledged by them, has thus far been left entirely to conjecture."

"Is it her family, or some supposed right of property the young lady desires to ascertain?" asked Conrad, who had listened with lively interest to Wakeley's singular narration.

"Alice, I think," answered the other, "has no desire to have the least inquiry made about either. She is strongly attached to my family, and wishes to know no other parents than myself and wife. So attached, indeed, that she would probably dread an investigation, lest it lead to the breaking up of her relations with my family. But I, as her guardian, view the matter in a different light. Her birth, at the worst, cannot be more disparaging than she already suspects; so that the discovery of her parentage cannot make matters worse, but may, and I trust will, make them better. And as to the other point, I have long thought it probable that she may have some rights of property, by will or descent, which are worth looking up, but of which, otherwise, grasping heirs or other pretended claimants would be

likely to deprive her. And I have been induced to think more seriously about the affair in consequence of an anonymous letter, or note, which she has recently received. It amounts, it is true, to no reliable evidence. But as its hints went to confirm my conjectures, I resolved I would submit it, in connection with all the attending circumstances, to some competent lawyer for his opinion, and, if anything can be done, for his assistance. And with this object I have called on you. But here is the note in question," he added handing a small, neatly folded and superscribed letter to Conrad, who took it and read —

"To Alice Wakeley.

You are the rightful owner of a valuable farming estate in this region, or not far distant, which was willed you in trust to be kept for you in the hands of another till you were found, and were of age, and then delivered over to you. This is to warn you against signing any papers till you know what you are about. One who knows."

Conrad read and re-read this anonymous note several times, and, for a minute or two, remained silently immersed in thought.

"What do you think of it?" at length asked Wakeley.

"Why, I think it a thing not to be lightly disregarded," replied the other. "At all events, it has been the means of recalling to me a singular visit I received yesterday which I will relate."

And accordingly he related all that passed the day previous in his interview with the would-be client to whom he had alluded, and whose person and manner he particularly described, adding —

"Now I have an impression not a very well founded one, perhaps, but still a rather strong one, that there may be some connection between this anonymous letter, and the undisclosed business of the fellow who made me the visit I have described to you. The letter speaks of real estate in this region rightfully belonging to the young lady, but about to be wrongfully withheld from her. And he said he would have preferred having a lawyer in this locality, which you say is the girl's birthplace, where investigation, should any be had, would be naturally commenced, in case she owns the real estate as alledged."

"I see, I see," responded Wakeley; "and out of both of them we may hit on some important clues to our objects, and especially so, if the writer of that note can be found."

"Where was it mailed?" asked Conrad.

"It was my first thought to ascertain that," said the other. "But the postmark was too faint to be read."

"But have you not some idea who may be the author?" again enquired Conrad.

"No," returned Wakeley hesitatingly — "no, unless it be a Miss or Mrs. Bishop, who acted as nurse to the mother and child. You see the handwriting is a woman's."

"I do," said Conrad. "But what course would you suggest for ascertaining this point?"

"I would first ascertain whether there may not be some of the hand-writing of this woman Bishop in town, as there may be, she having lived here about a year, and doubtless conducted most of the business transactions of the mother of Alice. And if any such writing can be found then compare it with this note."

"Well, where then, Mr. Wakeley?"

"Why then, Mr. Conrad, you will see, we can draw several inferences."

"Aye," was the reply, "and one of them would be that the woman was well informed about the legal rights of Alice; and another that she was probably equally so about the mystery of the child's birth and parentage."

"And yet another," rejoined Wakeley, "that she was bribed in some shape or other to keep the whole affair secret, but that the bribers had failed to make good the terms with the woman or otherwise fallen out with her."

"Very likely," responded Conrad. "But I should also infer, that she was still acting under some restraint, arising, perhaps, from her fear of persecution, if she revealed, or from a wish to wait till she could ascertain whether she would be most likely to make more by concealing than by disclosing her secret."

"That is about my reasoning on the subject," said Wakeley. "And now, the first step will be for you to find, if possible, some handwriting of the woman Bishop or somebody who knows it. And I know of no one so likely to know something of these things as a Mrs. Wilson, who was a hired maid of Dr. Tindall when Alice's mother was there, and who, with her husband, lives in the very same house in which Dr. Tindall resided. And by the way she may be able perhaps to put you on the track of the Dr. himself, who, if he can be traced out, approached, and be made to believe it for his interest, might make some important revelations. He is a reticent, cold and selfish fellow who doubtless has been unfaithful both to the girl and her relatives, the latter of whom I presume he would betray again for selfish con-

siderations. For if he would embezzle the money entrusted to him for keeping and bringing up the child, he would hardly hesitate to reveal what he knows of her connections, and their reasons for repudiating her. There is generally a way for reaching such fellows. And now, having given you all the information and instructions I can impart at present, it only remains to ask you whether you are willing to enter on the investigation?"

"Yes," promptly responded Conrad. "The case has greatly interested me. I will enter on the investigation with the greatest pleasure, and I shall do so with considerable faith in successful results."

CHAPTER IV

THE next day Conrad called on Mrs. Wilson in accordance with the suggestions of Wakeley. She was a small, keen-eyed and prompt woman; and he soon found her frank and communicative as well as very intelligent. And when he opened to her the object of his visit, she seemed at once to enter with lively interest into the subject of his inquiries. She had lived at Dr. Tindall's, she said, several years, including the whole period in which the stranger ladies were there, and during a good part of the childhood of the deserted Alice whom she well remembered as the smartest and prettiest little girl she ever saw. From often being in company with these ladies, doing their errands in the village, and conversing with them both when they were together and apart, she felt confident she knew more about them than anybody else in the place except Dr. Tindall, and perhaps his wife.

"But that, after all," she added, "was not much, as they were mighty close-mouthed persons about themselves and their affairs; and the Doctor, who doubtless knew much more than I did, was equally reserved on the subject."

"And still," remarked Conrad, "you must have been enabled, from all you saw and heard, to form some opinion concerning them, and the secret of their appearance here under such peculiar circumstances."

"O, yes, Sir," responded the other. "Opinions, or rather conjectures, I certainly did form about the affair;

and one of them was that a great cruelty, if not a foul wrong, had been committed against that young mother, who was known here only by the name of Susan, and was treated as an underling by her pretended nurse, Ann Bishop, who was rather her keeper, and a spy on her actions."

"I am prepared to believe it all," rejoined Conrad, "both in regard to the wrongs of the young mother and the character of the maid, or nurse, Ann Bishop, who must have been a fit tool for the cruel father. But the introduction of the name of this woman, Bishop, by you, reminds me of the first object of my visit here to-day, which was to ascertain whether you would know her handwriting, or know where any such handwriting of hers can now be found?"

"Yes, I can luckily say yes to both your queries. I often took written lists from these ladies of articles they sent me out to purchase for them; and I think I have still in my possession specimens of the handwriting of both of them, which I can find, at least that of Ann Bishop, who, at my request, wrote down a recipe for making a certain kind of cake, in a little book, which I kept for such purposes, and which I still have on hand."

"Indeed? That 's lucky — Let me see it."

Mrs. Wilson here rose, went into another room and soon returned with the manuscript recipe book in question, which she opened at the page where the promised chirography of Ann Bishop was found, and pointed out; when Conrad drew forth the anonymous note furnished by Wakeley, and placing the two side by side, and turning to Mrs. Wilson, asked,

"Do you see any resemblance in these two pieces of handwriting?"

"To be sure, I do, Sir. They are evidently from the same hand. And as I know that recipe to be in the handwriting of Ann Bishop that of the note is, of course, in hers also. Have you any doubt of it yourself?"

"No, not in the least; but I wanted your opinion before I gave mine."

"But where could you have got that singular writing, Mr. Conrad?"

Conrad then explained to the lady the circumstances under which the note came into his possession, and, in so doing, thought it best to inform her, under injunctions of secrecy, of the object he had in view, which was evidence to aid him in his proposed investigation of the whole mystery that now hung over the origin of the Castaway, Alice, and especially the question of her rights of property as alleged by the writer of the nameless note, that, if true, involved an important disclosure; and then he added,

"But what version do you put upon the statement of the writer, Mrs. Wilson?"

"I believe, Sir, she has told the truth."

"But why has that truth been withheld so long?"

"Because probably she thought it for her interest till now to withhold it. I think that in fact she was under pay to watch the young mother, conceal the whole secret of her situation and the name of her family. But she may consider the hush money now sufficiently earned, or what is more probable, a change may have occurred [in] that family in the death of Susan's father, and some claiming heir either does not know her, or thinks it safe to cast her off; and she now is feeling round for a chance to make a new bargain with the injured party, whom she seems somehow to have kept track of and identified in the person of Alice."

"All very probable. But have you any idea of the present whereabouts of this woman, Bishop?"

"No, Sir, no very definite idea, but I think she must now reside somewhere in this region — perhaps somewhere over the lake, or more probably at Newport."

"But why over the lake?"

"Well, Sir, my reason for saying this is not perhaps a very good one. But I thought of the story lately started that Doctor Tindall, who left the country after he gave Alice to the Shakers, had returned and was living in obscurity, and it may be, under a false name, somewhere over in that section, and as he and Ann Bishop used once to have good understanding, and were probably sharers in the secret of the family of Susan and her daughter, Alice, it occurred to me that they might have again got together. Yet that, perhaps, is not very likely."

"Not very. But it brings to mind another enquiry I wished to make of you, which was, whether you could give me any clue for finding this same Doctor Tindall, of whose rumored present residence you have just spoken. Do you know who started that story?"

"Yes, or at least I have heard it was one Dick Deter, who fishes and hunts a good deal in the lake, and in the region beyond, and who has asserted that in one of his excursions over there, he encountered a man, whom he believes to have been no other than Doctor Tindall."

"I must see this man, whom you call Dick Deter. Where may he be found?"

"If not absent, you will probably find him at his home in this village, which is the last house on the road leading out of the place towards the lake."

"Very well, I will look him up, hear his story and

judge for myself whether there is probability enough in it to warrant any search for the subject of it in that direction. And now one thing more, and I am through with my inquiries. You said, I think, you had in your possession the handwriting of both the young mother, Susan, and her attendant Bishop. The writing of the last we have examined. Now for the writing of the other."

"Well, Sir, I have several partly filled sheets of paper in the shape of a sort of broken diary, or memorandum of reflections, noted down at different times, which I believe to have been hers, but not having any more of her writing, with which to compare it, I cannot, of course, be exactly certain. I will get them for you, but first I may as well explain how I came by it. After she, with Ann Bishop, was taken away; and while I was cleaning up the room they occupied, I found these papers concealed under the cushion of a chair she always used to occupy."

With this, Mrs. Wilson went into an adjoining room, and soon returning with the papers in question, gave them to Conrad with the remark, "Having had my curiosity much excited by the mystery attending the Young Mother and those who appeared to control her, I carefully kept the papers, not knowing but that, some day, they might lead to the discovery of the secret. But as you are about to go into an investigation of the affair, and will, I suppose, inform me of the result, I resign them to you to decipher and study at your leisure."

Conrad then took his leave; and, on reaching his office, proceeded to open and try to read the manuscript thus

received. It had, however, been obviously written in such a hurry, at different times, and in brief snatches, at all times, that much of it was illegible. But after several efforts, he clearly made out the following, which we will head

Susan's Journal.

"O what a wretched fate is mine! Guarded and watched by paid keepers and spies, and made to feel that I am no better than a mere prisoner here, with no friend to talk and sympathize with me. Would to Heaven I had one however humble to whom I could unburden my troubled bosom. But as I have none, I will try the poor substitute of putting some of [my] most oppressing thoughts and feelings on paper. O, why should it be my hard lot to be thus cast off and persecuted for nothing which should be deemed a fault, unless it be one to love a worthy object, and then refuse, at parental commands, to violate my Heaven registered vows. O cruel fate, and O, doubly cruel father! May God forgive him!"

Again

"My babe smiles on me this morning. Would that those cherub smiles could greet the eyes of him who is now probably tossing on the rough billows of the far-far-away Indian Ocean. O, how they would gladden the father's heart. Smile on, sweet Alice. If a stain in the world's eyes is made for the present to rest on thee, it will not be always thus; and would not now but for my promise to him, who thought it wisdom in me to keep our secret. But he did not then foresee what afterwards occurred. And still, perhaps, my course was all for the best."

And yet again, at a later date —

"From many things, I suspect, that Ann Bishop must have lately received a letter from my father; and I have a presentiment that he will soon come and tear me away from my child. Ann and Doctor Tindall appear to have many secret talks together. These circumstances with their urging me to wean Alice, fill me with painful apprehensions."

And still further a few days later —

"Another misery! James Sloan last evening appeared outside the garden, and succeeded in attracting my attention. He had come from the other side of the lake to tell me he had just returned from a visit to our old neighborhood, and there learned that the ship in which my my dear Charles last sailed had not for nearly two years been heard from and it was feared that she was lost. If so, and he was lost with her, then, indeed, will my cup of sorrow overflow."

Conrad could make but little of all this. It threw no light on the question of the family origin of Alice, and none on that of her legitimacy, except to leave the inference that the latter could, and would, some day, be satisfactorily explained. But who was the James Sloan the writer mentioned in a way which leads one to suppose he was familiarly acquainted with the whole secret, at least of *her* affairs? He then evidently lived somewhere over the lake — perhaps does now. This, then, doubled his motive for going there; and he soon resolved to make the excursion without delay. But the first object of the excursion, the search for Doctor Tindall, could not be expected to be gained unless the hunter,

Deter, described by Mrs. Wilson, could be engaged as a guide and attendant; so he, as a first step, must be visited.

Accordingly, in the course of the day, he repaired to Deter's house, which he had no difficulty in finding. The owner, who was at home, was a thin, wiry, sandy-haired man with the appearance and language of the backwoodsman, but with a countenance betokening a good share of shrewdness and observation.

"Having heard, Mr. Deter," said Conrad, by way of opening his business, "that you suppose you recently, in one of your excursions, encountered Doctor Tindall, who once lived in this village, I have called to talk with you on the subject. And I will begin by asking if you personally knew the Doctor when he resided here."

"Yes," replied the other. "Know'd him like a book. He doctored me once when I got sick."

"And you think you have seen him not long since?"

"Guess I have — most know I have."

"More direct and confident than I expected. And now, Mr. Deter, can I engage you to go as my attendant and guide to conduct me to the place where you saw the man you supposed to be Doctor Tindall?"

"Well, now, I swan, I don't know what to tell you. You are a lawyer, I b'leve — Ain't going to snake out the Doctor from his lurking place for some old affair nor nothing, be you?"

"O, no. I merely want to see him to make some inquiries about a matter I have engaged to look up, and about which I think Doctor Tindall must know something."

"Then that's it, is it? Well, I vow, I think I'll go; and dunno but I would any way; for I didn't take much

of a shine to that are Doctor — always thought that he was a kinder dark man. But no matter about that, when do you wish to go?"

"Tomorrow morning."

"How to travel?"

"Across the lake by boat, and then on foot. I am a good walker and a very tolerable woodsman. And if we find time to extend our excursion to the top of the mountain, so much the better."

"So say I, mister. We'll have a time, I guess at any rate. Then you may call it a bargain; and I 'll be ready for you at seven tomorrow morning, with rifle, fishline, and a few rations of something to eat."

CHAPTER V

WARM, bright and beautiful was the early September morning as the golden sun, mounting over the lofty peak of the grey old Kearsarge, burst down in a flood of effulgence upon the sleeping waters of Sunapee; when Conrad and Dick Deter, in accordance with their agreement of the previous day, pushed their light skiff from the western shore of the lake for the settlement on its Northeastern border, four of five miles distant.

"What land-mark is there in sight on the other side," asked Conrad as soon as they had passed out beyond the small, obstructing headlands on their right and left, and found themselves fairly afloat on the broad lake. "What landmark, for which you can set your course, so as to lose no ground in rowing?"

"Well, sir, just turn your eye longways of the lake away to the Northeast and you can dimly see a sharp headland making out there, can't you?"

"Yes, I can make that out plainly enough."

"I suppose so. Well, that is the point for which I have already set my course. After we reach that, we round it sharply and pass into a long narrow bay which will afford us a clear run of a mile or so to our final landing place."

Dick Deter then threw off his coat, and bent himself lustily to the oars for the next hour, at the end of which, he slackened his exertions, and began to look wistfully

around him, as if some new subject for thought and inquiry was gradually occurring to his mind. And presently, as if his impressions, whatever they might be, were growing stronger, he ceased rowing altogether and while laying up his oars and letting the boat run on by the impulse it had received, muttered partly to himself,

"Hold up, Dick Deter. I don't quite like the looks of things. Let's take a more careful observation."

He then commenced glancing closely and carefully along the surface of the lake in various directions, then at the different points of the horizon all around, and finally at, and round the sky overhead, till his gaze at length settled uneasily on a small, bright red spot that had appeared in the unclouded heavens, a few degrees North of the sun.

"What now, Deter?" asked Conrad, who had been noting the movements of the other with an air of puzzled curiosity. "Are you looking for prognostics of the weather? I can see nothing about this bright sunshine and clear sky to cause either doubts or inquiries."

"I hardly supposed you could," responded the hunter. "Some folks are wise, some otherwise, and some weatherwise."

"And which do you claim to be yourself?" asked the former.

"Well, not wise, nor exactly otherwise, but weatherwise as the best of them, if not more so," answered Deter. "After half a life-time's experience and close observation in the woods and on the water, I stand ready to strive with any you can scare up in foretelling the weather. I've tried it with a great many, in my day, and I swore I could beat them with one hand tied behind me."

"Indeed?" responded Conrad with an incredulous smile. "If you are such a weather prophet as that, I must heed your prognostics during our excursions. But for today, at least, you predict no change of weather, do you?"

"I just do, Sir," replied Deter, seriously. "And if something much out of the ordinary run of weather freaks don't come along twixt this and sundown, I'll agree to be set down as not *wise*, but very particularly *otherwise*."

"Why, Mr. Deter," rejoined Conrad. "With everything looking so fair around and overhead, what signs can you possibly see of any such change as you seem to be expecting?"

"Well, I will tell you. In the first place, if you look along the face of the water, you will see a lively sort of quivering motion of the air, like what you see over a burning brush heap, or over the top of a chimney, showing the air there to be rising as swiftly as the sparks that are seen to be whirled along upward with it. In the second place, you see the sky low down all around has a singular, light greenish color, which is generally seen before great blows of wind. Next you see that curious bright red spot up there near the sun, which could not be found there in any natural state of the air. And lastly this hot, dead, stifling air, which you can feel as well as I, and which we both know to be too unusual, this time of the year, to last long without making a rumpus in the elements somewhere. Now all these signs I have seen and marked what followed, but never saw them altogether at one time, nor ever so strong and striking before. And I know something remarkable is soon to happen. But whether it will come in the shape

of hail or hurricane I can't pretend to say. I don't know the wherefore of all these signs which your book philosophy may perhaps teach *you*. *I* only know what they foretell; and I feel so certain of it in the present case, that if you say so, I'll row you back, and we will put off the jaunt to another day when I can better warrant the weather."

"No," said Conrad, after some hesitation, evidently caused by the confident prognostics of the other. "No, no, I will not on *my* part give up the trip for anything so uncertain as weather signs."

"Very well," said Deter a little doggedly. "I guess I can stand anything that may come as well and as long as you can. So we will say no more about it."

The hunter than again put in his oars and for a while the party glided on through the lifeless air and waters in silence; when Conrad, for the purpose of diverting the evidently still boding thoughts of his companion, now turned to him and asked,

"What is your fall and spring hunting range?"

"Round the borders of these mountains for short excursions, and up among the sources of the Merrimac for the long ones," answered the other, brightening up at the, to him, interesting question.

"That must be a wild and woody country round the sources of the Merrimac, and well stocked with fish and game, I suppose."

"It used to be, when I first took to trap and rifle. Why, I have caught fine salmon as low down as Plymouth, and the river above which then takes the name of the Pemigewasset, was full of the finest trout you ever see; while in the woods there was no scarcity of bears, deer, moose, wolves and other beasts of prey."

"You doubtless have had some startling adventures with wild beasts, in the course of your woodman's life."

"Mebby you would have thought so if you had been there to see. But after all that can be said about the greater plenty of wild beasts of all kinds, in former times, I never met with an adventure more curious or dangerous, than the one that happened to me in the regions we 've been talking about, on my last expedition not six months ago."

"Indeed? Please relate it."

"Well, I left my home here, on one of the first days of April, when the snow in all this section had entirely disappeared. But when I reached that part of the Pemigewasset which I had calculated to make my head-quarters, or central camp, I found the snow quite too deep for my operations; and so I struck off down to the lower wilderness Eastward, lying round Squam Lake, where I thought the snow and ice must be so far gone that the bears would be crawling out from their winter quarters, and the otter, fisher, and other fur animals, beginning to be lively, around the mouths of the streams. Well, after a snug day's tramp, I reached the thickly wooded borders of this lake, about sun an hour high, and pitched on a bare piece of ground in front of a large old log and amidst a thicket of big hemlocks. To cut and set a stout forked stake two yards in front of the log, get a pole reaching from the fork to the log, to serve for a reach pole, put up, on each side, a few ribs for rafters, cover the whole compactly with spruce-boughs, and then collect a good quantity of fine hemlock sprigs for bed and pillow, was the work of perhaps only one hour. I next, from a bunch of birch bark and dry twigs snatched from the trees as I came along, kindled a

bright fire and drew up a lot of coarser fuel for the night. This completed all the accommodations I wanted, so simple a thing is a hunter's temporary habitation, which, by those who know how, can be made quicker than most of our women folks can get breakfast or supper. I then set down on the edge of my bough-bedding, with my feet to the fire, unpacked my provision and made a luxurious meal; for with the tired and hungry woodsman it is the *appetite*, not the *quality* of the food that makes the luxury. After sitting a while toasting my feet enjoying the comforts and noting the curious effects of my fire, as in the now settled darkness it flashed round on the ghost-like trunks of the old trees, and left all spaces between looking like black walls closing me in on every side, I was on the point of falling back for my night's sleep; when happening to raise my eyes into the top of a giant hemlock standing about fifty feet in front of me I beheld a sight which made me leap to my feet and grasp my rifle in an instant. I am not much of a coward, I believe; but I swan, what I there saw brought cold streaks round the roots of my hair, and made the hair itself feel as if it was rising up like the bristles on the back of a scart hog. That sight was two great, winking eyes glittering like two live coals of fire, and burning down upon me from a large projecting limb of the tree; while I could discern the dim outlines of the long, huge creature to which those terrible eyes evidently belonged, as he lay crouching along the limb and ready for a spring. I knew it was a panther and a monstrous one at that. My thoughts flew from the monster to myself pretty lively about that time, I can tell you. But what should be done? Should I lay down, watch him, and fall asleep to be awakened by him clutching at my

throat? Or should I fire at him, and, with the uncertain aim I should get in the dark, probably only wound and bring him down upon me to tear me to pieces in his desperation. It was hard to choose between these two courses; and I stood, for a minute or two, doubting which to take; when I heard him fixing his claws in the limb preparatory for leaping. This instinctively decided me, and I instantly raised my rifle, aimed directly between those burning eyes, which actually gleamed along the barrel of my piece, and fired. As I was recovering from the stunning report, which shook the still forest like a clap of thunder, a heavy body struck the earth not a dozen feet from where I stood, followed by such a floundering, thrashing and scratching among the bushes, all the time accompanied by such hissing, spitting sounds and such broken and half smothered screeching and bellowing, that it made my blood run cold to hear it, and made me shudder and tremble so that, for some time, I was unable to re-load my gun. At length succeeding, however, I stood on the defensive against another leap from the desperately struggling brute, if it should be made. But, much to my relief, his struggles grew less and less violent and soon ceased altogether; when I lighted a torch and went to the spot where I found a panther, nearly nine feet long, stretched lifeless on the ground with a bullet hole in his forehead. It was a great strike, that; for I got the twenty dollar bounty on his head and twenty more for his skin, besides escaping a mortal danger."

"A wild and hazardous adventure, truly," responded Conrad; "and you were doubly fortunate in the result — a danger escaped and a prize won. But here we are at last close upon the point of land at which you have been aiming."

"Ah? So we are, sure as a gun, I was not minding our whereabouts. Well, the main tug is over, and now for doubling the Cape of Good Hope," said the hunter as he sent the skiff whirling round the point into the bay, or deep indenture, which the water here made from the general outline of the lake a considerable distance into the land. "I call this point Cape Good Hope because I consider it hereabouts the best fishing ground in the whole lake."

"There is one fellow at least, I see, of the same opinion," rejoined the other, pointing to a man fishing from a canoe anchored near the side of the bay, a few hundred yards ahead.

"That so?" returned Dick with interest, as he glanced over his shoulder towards the thus indicated fisherman. "Well, it is just so, sure enough. I wonder who it can be? I must take a closer look at him. O, I know him now. It is Jim Sloan, the best fisherman in all this section."

"Sloan — Jim Sloan?" repeated Conrad musingly. "I have heard of that man somewhere, I think. Aha! I have it now," he added, as he recalled the name incidentally mentioned in Susan's diary. "Yes, I have it; and I must have a talk with that man — that is, if he be the man I am thinking of. He lives somwhere on this side the lake, don't he?"

"Yes — on a small farm at the head of this bay."

"How long has he resided here?"

"Off and on, fifteen or twenty years, I think."

"Where did he come from when he settled here?"

"Nobody knows exactly, as he always seemed rather shy on that subject. But from what he once accidentally dropt in my hearing, I judged he formerly lived with

some rich family near Portsmouth who probably paid him for his services enough to buy his place with, and may have furnished more since, on some terms or other; for he always appeared to have more money than, with his little farming, a good deal of fishing, and easy life generally, he would be likely to earn."

"What kind of a man is he?"

"I'll be hanged if I know myself; for he has such a way of talking between fun and earnest, and dodging questions, while pretending to answer them, that I never could feel sure I had got to the bottom of his character at all. But we will run alongside of him, and get up a chat, when you can judge of him for yourself."

This was just what was desired by Conrad, who, by this time, felt quite confident that the man of whom they were speaking must be the person mentioned in the diary, and consequently the one thus designated whom he had been hoping to find for examination; but one, at the same time, that must be approached, to insure success, with considerable caution. He therefore greatly preferred the first advance for a parley should be made by some other than himself, lest otherwise, the man should be put on his guard.

Under his newly formed purpose of putting his skiff alongside of that of the fisherman, Deter now vigorously applied his oars, and had lessened the distance between them nearly one-half; when Conrad, who had been watching the movements of the first named personage, exclaimed —

"Hold, hold up a little Deter. He is lifting his anchor to go away. Perhaps you had better speak to him."

"Not to go away if appearances don't lie," responded Dick, dropping his oars and looking keenly forward a

moment. "No; for he has evidently got something there worth staying for. Can't you see how he stands bracing himself there in his boat, with his fish pole bending nearly double from something tugging at the other end of his line. It must be a monster of a salmon trout, and he took in his anchor to enable him the better to give the fish play and so exhaust him before trying to draw him in. Yes, a monster; for see! by Hokey! he is actually making the skiff move through the water! I will row nearer and we will see that game out before we disturb it by speaking."

The skiff was accordingly rowed up within half a dozen rods of the scene of action; when the two watched the manoeuvers of the fisherman with breathless interest.

With his eyes intently fixed on his line, which he kept gently taut, the fisherman still stood up there in his skiff silently watching every turn and motion of the huge, desperately struggling fish he had hooked, and humoring it in all its starts and plunges as it now suddenly struck off at sharp angles, now dove down towards the bottom and rose floundering and flapping on the surface, till it had completely exhausted itself and become an easy prey to its captor, who then safely drew it into his boat, and gave vent to his exultation by swinging his hat over his head and uttering a war-whoop that the wildest Indian could not have surpassed.

"Oh! Why!" he exclaimed in some confusion, as his eyes fell on Conrad and Deter looking on from their skiff. "Excuse me, gentlemen, I was so engrossed in securing my prize, that I had not noticed your approach, else I should have hardly indulged in such a wild outburst, which I think must have been inspired by the re-

turning spirit of Old Passaconaway, the great Wizzard Indian chief who once ruled over the woods and waters of this very region, and always killed the best deer and caught the largest fish such, it was said, as no other hand could ever capture. But you see I had some grounds for a little shouting," he added, lifting up the fish by the gills with both hands nearly as high as his head, so as to display its whole length. "A twenty pounder at least! And the largest Lunge Trout, I'll venture to assert ever taken out of Lake Sunapee."

"Only see! A little whale, by Jonah!" exclaimed Deter. "But that reminds me to ask you what are you going to do for the rest of the day?"

"I can tell you much better at night than now," replied Sloan, laughing. "A curious reminder that of yours, and it reminds me of a question for *you* — where are you bound, Dick?"

"On an excursion up the mountain," replied the latter. "At least we think of it, I, and this gentleman, who, as perhaps I should have before told you, is Esquire Conrad, the lawyer at Lake Village. Now what do you say to going along with us?"

"O yes," replied Sloan. "Yes, as far as my house at the head of the bay; for with my rare piece of luck it is a good time for me to quit fishing for the day. So drive ahead and I will follow."

"Have you any objection to my taking a seat with you in your skiff, Mr. Sloan?" asked Conrad. "I would like to be looking at that splendid fish of yours as we go on, and perhaps be learning of the captor something of the art which enables him to be so successful."

"Certainly not," said the other. "Dick, row along side and let the gentleman get in."

This was speedily effected. But instead of interesting himself in the captured fish or in taking lessons in fishing from the captor, any further than to keep up the appearance of so doing, he mainly employed his eyes and his thoughts in studying the countenance and with it the character of the man before him, who was evidently wholly unconscious of the scrutiny. And the result was, that he was, at the bottom, a person of more substantial qualities than he had been represented to possess. With a good figure, shapely features, he had a clear, searching countenance, which betokened intelligence and shrewdness; while his manners and conversation evinced considerable intercourse with different kinds of society and knowledge of the world.

After conversing a while on the subject first introduced, Conrad adroitly turned his remarks to his own profession, and related several anecdotes connected with legal practice; and, by way of experiment, closed by describing the late singular visit he had received from an unknown person, who attempted to retain him for an undisclosed service, as described in the foregoing chapter. This he did in a careless, off-hand manner, but nevertheless kept his eyes keenly fixed on the countenance of the other, who soon began to evince a lively interest in the story, and who, at the conclusion, gave a perceptible start, and hastily asked —

"Did he tell you his name?"

"No, he avoided doing that — purposely, as it seemed to me."

"What kind of a looking fellow was he?"

Conrad then minutely described the personal appearance, manners, and language of the man in question, and ended by enquiring — "Do you know any such

person, who would be likely to take such a singular course?"

"I can't say that I do," replied Sloan with considerable hesitation and a searching glance at the questioner.

"Well, I suppose you think I was foolish in not accepting his offered fee, and engaging to take up for him, don't you?"

"No — perhaps not," replied the former. "There are always two sides to a case; and who knows but what you may be employed by an opposite party, who won't be afraid to disclose to you the character of the business they would have you undertake for them. The fellow doubtless thought himself quite cunning, and feels very safe and sure in pursuing his object, forgetting that sometimes a ball of iniquity that has been years in winding up, is unwound in as many hours."

Even beyond what he had dared to hope, had Conrad's covert experiment resulted favorably for his purpose, which was, as the reader has doubtless already anticipated, to discover the position in which Sloan now stood towards the different parties which might exist in the case he had undertaken to investigate — whether he had any knowledge of the person, character, and objects of the questionable visitor above mentioned, or the Brown Tempter, as he had been named, and whether there was any connection between the two. And having made up his mind on all these points from the ingenious, indirect mode of examination, he caused Sloan unwittingly to undergo — having satisfied himself that the latter *did* know the person and character of that visitor, and more than surmised his objects, but that there was no collusion, nor even any sympathy between them, he forebore to press his advantage, believing it the better

policy to reserve that for a future opportunity, and perhaps for some new mode of approach or examination.

The adventures of Conrad on the lake were not yet over. At the close of the conversation above narrated, Sloan, who had become so interested therein as to have nearly ceased rowing, at once began earnestly to ply his oars, and send the skiff rapidly forward towards the destined landing now visible in the distance. After proceeding a while, Conrad, who sat in the bow of the boat, looking forward noticed a short distance ahead another boat having on board a small party of ladies with a gentleman oarsman, who was bringing his little craft to a stand, for the purpose, evidently, of giving some of his fair passengers a chance to see, or secure some object in the water. In a few minutes Conrad's skiff had approached so near the other that he readily perceived why it had been brought to a stand: — a young lady, whose graceful figure was partially enwrapped by a fluttering light, blue silken scarf, but whose features, at the moment, were concealed by her bonnet, was bending over the stern of the boat, and with outstretched arm, was vainly trying to grasp a pond lily flowering on the surface of the water. And in another minute, while passing almost within grazing distance, he had reached down, plucked the flower and tossed it into the lap of the fair seeker, who, with a low "thank you" and a sweet smile, raised her lovely features till they encountered the fascinated gaze of the giver, who, in turn, was rewarded with a look scarcely less emotional than his own. All this passed in a moment, but it was one of those moments in which load-stars are created.

CHAPTER VI

THE next scene of our eventful story opens at a cross of the roads, in the woods, near the foot of one of the highest and most sharply elevated peaks of the more eastern New England mountains, the hoary Kearsarge. One of the roads forming this cross wound along under the mountain and passed off northerly to an obscure settlement a mile or two distant; while the other road ascended directly up to the summit of the peak.

Our party, now consisting not only of Conrad and Deter, but also of Sloan, who, after landing from the lake and inviting the others to a light lunch at his house, concluded to join them in their excursion to the top of the mountain. And having proceeded thus far they had now all here again paused to cool and rest themselves a little in the forest shade before commencing the steep and stony ascent. It was by this time considerably past the middle of the forenoon. And the unusual warmth of the morning, of which we have already spoken, had steadily increased with the advance of the day. Although the fierce and scorching rays of the sun were deadened by the dull haze that, for the last hour, had been slowly creeping over the face of the sky, yet the heat was seemingly even more oppressive than before. A profound stillness prevailed through the hushed forest. Not the least sign or semblance of a breeze stirred the close and suffocating atmosphere. All nature, indeed, seemed suffering under the unnatural condition of the elements. The trees wilted and drooped, and the

birds sat panting on their limbs reluctant to move at the nearest approach of man. All of our party, for different reasons, seemed inclined to silence. Conrad was recurring to the vision of loveliness that had so unexpectedly crossed his path on the lake, wondering who she could be, and forming schemes for meeting her again. Sloan was debating in mind what, in this excursion, was the lawyer's object, which, from the words and manner of the latter, with what was within his own knowledge, he now more and more suspected, but which he had no wish to thwart. And Deter, through the openings of the trees, was anxiously scanning the heavens, which being noticed and rightly interpreted by Conrad, he was thereby induced to remark —

"The tempest, or at least great change of weather, which you this morning so confidently predicted as soon to occur, does not make its appearance, it seems, Mr. Deter."

"There is yet time enough for that," responded the latter. "Such an event as I then confidently predicted and still as confidently expect, does not usually happen till about the middle of the afternoon; unless nater gets to hurrying matters."

"And do you think she is hurrying matters, today, Dick?" interposed Sloan, with an air of mingled interest and jocoseness.

"I mistrust so," replied Deter; "and that we may reach the top of the mountain, look round what we wish, get down and out of the woods, at least, before anything happens, I move that we now at once begin to push along up."

"I second the motion," rejoined Sloan. "Some such thoughts as appears to have possessed Dick, have, I

confess, several times crossed my mind, this forenoon. At all events, we shall all soon suffocate here. So let's forward without further delay."

Conrad consenting, the whole party now rose and commenced climbing up the rough and rocky path before them. Andafter a toilsome and sweltering march of something over an hour, including the several pauses they were compelled to make to take breath and rest their overstrained muscles, they at length accomplished their trying task, and dropped down, breathless and exhausted on the broad, bare face of the block of granite that crowned the lofty summit.

The view from this elevated stand was all around one of surpassing magnificence. Not like views from Mount Washington, or other peaks of double of the altitude of this detached mountain, where all below lies dim, confused and undefined in the far down distance, the surrounding country here was only agreeably diminished on the vision to a distinct miniature picture of bright streams, gleaming waterfalls, glassy lakes, clustering hamlets and villages, with their pointed church spires and commingling green fields and deeper tinted woodlands. On the east, down immediately below, beautifully meandered, through the whole visible reach of its pleasant and cultivated valley, the tranquil Merrimac, seemingly fringing with a cord of silver the skirt of the mountain. Beyond, and a little to the left, gleamed out from among its hundred green islands the sleeping waters of the romantic lake, Winnipesaukee; while directly in front, farm and forest swept away in the lessening perspective to the horizon, along which stretched a light belt indicating the vicinity of the ocean. On the south, away beyond the intervening swells, that marked

the variegated country, rose in the misty distance the blue heads of the Wachusett and Monadnock mountains. On the west, the eye, after resting a moment on the tranquil waters of the near and bright Sunapee, wandered onward over the broken and wooded expanse, till it rested at length on the long, low down ranges of the Green Mountains of Vermont and Massachusetts. And finally, on the north, the far off White Hills dimly greeted the vision in the semblance of a long line of sea-foam cast up on a tempest smitten strand.

After mutely contemplating, awhile, the imposing scenery so magnificently extended everywhere around them, the party simultaneously arose with the understood purpose of commencing their descent from the mountain; when Conrad turned to his guide and attendant, Deter, and, with some hesitation, said —

"Whereabouts down here lies that neighborhood to which you proposed to conduct me for the purpose of finding the person I named, whom you supposed to reside there?"

"In this direction," replied Deter, pointing down to a settlement near the foot of the mountain, where the scattered habitations were visible over the intervening forest, some distance to the North of the road by which the party had ascended. "And I have been thinking that we had better, instead of going back the way we came up to the cross road, take a wholly new, and more direct route to the place, which will be nearer, and easier of descent, without much increasing the distance to the lake."

"And how far are we here from that neighborhood; and how far then to the lake?" asked the former.

"Less than two miles to the first place," returned Deter, "and then less than four to the lake. We can reach the first in a little over half an hour by the route I propose; and there we shall find a road, which, if you can find your man and get through with him without much delay, will nearly take us, in the next hour to our landing."

"Who is the man you wish to see there, Mr. Conrad?" here asked Sloan, with an air which seemed to invite the confidence of the other. "If he is the person I suspect, perhaps I may assist you in finding and drawing from him what you wish to learn."

"Mr. Sloan," responded the former. "I have hesitated to name him to you lest I defeat my own object. But from some remarks you made in our conversation in the boat, and some things previously brought to my knowledge, I am now pretty well convinced that I may safely answer you candidly — the man is Doctor Tindall, formerly of Lake Village."

"So I have been conjecturing. And I have also my conjectures about your object in seeing him."

"If that be so," returned Conrad, in some surprise, "then you are a closer observer than I had thought, or else your knowledge of the singular circumstances in which my object is involved, is more extensive than I had supposed. And I now only wish to be assured that you are not unfriendly to that object to open myself freely to you."

"You have much more to hope than to fear from me in that respect," replied Sloan.

"Taking that for granted, then, I will candidly and fully explain to you the object I have in view, and what little progress I have made in pursuing it."

He then related all he had been able to learn of the history of the Castaway Alice, which he followed up by declaring his detemination to pursue his enquiries till he had fathomed the mystery of her birth and family, and ascertained her rights of property, and concluded by respectifully asking the other to impart all he knew on the subject to aid him in the investigation.

"I was a friend of the unhappy mother of the cast-off child, Alice, and am a friend to Alice herself," hesitatingly remarked Sloan, evading any direct reply. "Yes, a friend to both, and am not sorry to see the move you are making. But as to volunteering to disclose to you all I know about them and their connections, that is a thing, as I have been situated, which I must first reflect upon. If I was compelled to testify in a court, I should then have good excuse for making disclosures. But, at present, I should prefer to have them come from someone else. Perhaps you may be able to draw something out of that miserable Doctor Tindall."

"I will try it," rejoined Conrad. "For the purpose of favoring you in making revelations, which you fear, probably, may subject you to the ill will or reproaches of some, I will try it. And we will now at once set out down the mountain to see if we can find the man. Deter," he added, calling to his guide, who had, during the foregoing conversation, been standing some rods aloof watching the aspect of the sky along the western horizon. "Deter, come forward, now, and lead the way down the mountain."

"Too late! too late for that, at present. It is coming sooner than I counted on. We shall be safer here than in the woods below, where most likely we should be caught," cried the hunter, with an earnest, remonstrating air.

"What mean you, Deter?" demanded Conrad in surprise.

"Look away yonder!" resumed the former, in an excited tone, as he pointed to the Northwestern horizon. "It has more than doubled in size within the last three minutes. And see! there is just such another cloud heaving up into view from the south."

Conrad and Sloan immediately turned their eyes in the direction thus indicated; and intently gazed a moment in silence. The cloud first pointed out to them, which had by this time advanced into plain view, was rapidly rolling down from the North in a long line of dark and doubling vapor, resembling in its hurrying evolutions and wild appearance, an eddying column of pitchy smoke fiercely bursting from the side of a burning edifice. The cloud in the South, which was scarcely less threatening in appearance, seemed to be advancing with nearly equal rapidity.

"Both these clouds," at length remarked Sloan, "are evidently moving in the line of the valley of Connecticut river, and what is most unaccountable to me, is they are moving in almost exactly opposite directions — the one down and the other up the river."

"It is certainly very unusual," responded Conrad, with now thoroughly awakened interest. "It sometimes occurs, however, I think I have somewhere read in the history of remarkable storms. But whenever it does, it indicates an ominous condition of the atmosphere. And such, perhaps, we have had all day, as seems to have been noticed by Mr. Deter, here, of whom I should ask pardon for treating his prognostics so lightly."

"Yes," said Deter conplacently. "I saw signs that

never yet cheated me. I know'd something would break before night. But I vags! those scary clouds look as if we are going to have more than I was then bargaining for."

"But there is no certainty that those clouds will come in this direction," remarked Sloan.

"Of course not," rejoined Conrad; "but I am very apprehensive they will. When those two terrific clouds meet, the combined currents of wind, which even now must be powerful to drive them forward with such rapidity, will probably turn with redoubled force, in some new direction. And as somewhere nearly abreast of us, where the collision seems likely to take place, there [is] a bend to the East in that valley, which the currents appear closely to follow, they will have acquired an inclination or cant this way, that, by a natural law of forces, they will be very apt to take."

"That is good philosophy, because it is common sense," said the hunter. "You know more than I thought you did, Mr. Lawyer."

The distant spectacle, on which their attention was riveted, had now become too exciting to permit much further conversation; and all stood silently watching the approaching elemental encounter with breathless interest. The two opposing clouds, now not a half dozen miles apart, were swiftly advancing on each other, like two hostile squadrons rushing forward to meet in the shock of battle; while around, and over each of the long vapoury columns, incessantly played a thousand attenuated gleams of the fiercely shooting lightnings. And with their nearer approach, larger and fiercer streams of the electric discharges were seen leaping across the lessening space between, followed by the low,

short, sharp, quickly repeated mutterings of the distant thunder. And now the warring columns met, stopped short in their swift career, mingled, and then slowly rose heavenward in one vast, dome-like pile of black, convolving vapor. Presently the whole, congregated mass suddenly became wildly agitated; and then, after surging and eddying in angry commotion a moment, as suddenly burst out horizontally eastward, with the seeming force of exploding gunpowder, and, drawing everything behind into the whirling vortex, went careening across the country, with inconceivable fury directly towards the mountain on which stood our party, the awe-struck spectators of the terrific spectacle.

"It is coming!" exclaimed Deter. "It is coming as straight as a gun right towards us. And, as I know by the different hills and swells which are scattered at long intervals along its path in this direction, and which it is cutting off from view in quick succession as it comes, that it is moving on this way with the speed of a race-horse."

"Aye," said Conrad; "and as the distance to the spot it is probably now passing over, cannot be more than twenty-five miles in an air line, it will, allowing it the speed of some other tornadoes — it will be upon us in less than as many minutes."

"Well," responded Sloan, "we shall be quite as safe here as anywhere. We will watch its progress till it strikes the mountain, and then slip over behind this ledge on the east, and there, close under its lee, neither wind nor hail can injure, or much disturb us."

On, on, in the meantime, rapidly rolled that terrible storm-cloud that had thus started forth on its dread mission so ominous of death and desolation to all that it

might meet in its fearful pathway. Unlike ordinary clouds, which move so high as to leave unobstructed the view beneath them to the usual reach of the vision, this one seemed to hug the very earth as it swept along its surface, and from the earth rose to the mid-heavens in one vast, perpendicular wall, whose pitchy blackness was only relieved by the broad flashes of the lightning that occasionally enwrapped it. On, on it came, making, with its nearer approach, its speed more and more apparent with every mile of its progress; while the low, sullen, confused murmuring sounds which proceeded from the elementary commotion in the distance, and which had every moment been increasing on the ear, had now risen to a prolonged continuous roar, so deep and loud as to drown the heaviest peals of thunder, whose occurrence could only be known from the dazzling lightnings and the jarring of the earth that followed them. On, on, it still came in unabated fury, until it reached the Western borders of Lake Sunapee, which, in its rapid transit, it here converted into broad belts of boiling foam, and there raised in huge watery columns hundreds of feet into the air, when, reaching the opposite shores, and leaving the bright expanse of water it had thus crossed seemingly in a single moment, enveloped in darkness and lost to the sight, it went sweeping, with redoubled fury over the country towards the mountain.

As the tornado neared the foot of the mountain, our party, on its summit, stood amazed and appalled at the awful scene that greeted their recoiling senses from the country below. Houses, barns and other buildings were being instantly demolished and strown in fragments over the adjoining fields, or whirled up bodily

high into the air. Large tracts of forest were here laid prostrate with the earth before the amazing power of the blast, or their trunks twisted off or uprooted, were hurled up into the eddying clouds, where leaves, boughs, broken branches of trees, and large trees themselves, with the timbers of crushed buildings, dead birds, various domestic animals, and even sheep and horses, were seen swiftly revolving in the black whirling mass that formed the van of this frightful tempest.

"God have mercy on the people of the country here below us!" exclaimed Conrad, recoiling with a shudder from the scene. "But see! It has already reached the mountain, and in two minutes more will be here. To our shelter then — all instantly to our shelter, lest we be swept from our footing on this narrow summit, and dashed to pieces on the rocks below."

It required no second warning to put each man of the party in instant motion in escaping from their exposed situation; and hastily descending down the Northern slope of the summit eight or ten rods, they turned short round the point of the precipitous ledge before mentioned and proceeded along horizontally beneath it, till they came abreast of their original position on the top. Here they found a high shelving rock, under which they safely ensconsed themselves and anxiously awaited the event.

That event was close at hand. Almost the next moment, indeed, the tornado burst, with the shock and uproar of a thousand thunders, over the bold peak above their shrinking heads, and went swooping down upon the reeling forests below, followed by crash after crash of falling trees, mingled with the deafening din and

awful tumult of the elemental commotion, which made the whole mountain vibrate and tremble as if shaken by an earthquake. The uproar, however, was not of long duration. It soon perceptibly lulled, and then, gradually subsiding, at length ceased; and the tempest was over and gone forever, having, in one short hour, arisen, traversed a wide tract of country, devastated several whole townships in the vicinity of Lake Sunapee, spent its force round the foot and sides of Kearsarge mountain, and departed as suddenly and as with little warning as it came.[1]

[1] The description here given is no fictitious representation. The tornado occurred in the locality, in which we have placed it, about the year 1822, and exhibited a power of the wind never before or since experienced in New England, or, indeed in the whole United States, excepting, perhaps, the more recent tornado in Iowa, which might possibly have equalled, but not surpassed it. The most minute and best account of this remarkable tempest was written and published by the Hon. Isaac Hill of Concord, N. H., in the journal conducted by him at that place, called *The Visitor*.

CHAPTER VII

OUR party, on the subsidence of the tempest, immediately emerged from the rock-sheltered refuge, which had fully protected them from all harm amidst the uproar and distruction that had been going on all around them, and, under the guidance of the hunter, made their way down the mountain in the direction of the obscure settlement below, to which it had been agreed they should next proceed. For the first quarter of a mile their course led them only over the vast beds of the bare, multiform blocks of granite that covered all the upper portions of the peak, or through the low, struggling shrubbery, which constituted the upper belt of vegetation on its sides, but which, from their smallness and pliancy, had left few marks of the passage of the tornado, and consequently few obstructions in the path of the descending travellers to retard their rapid progress. Nor did they meet many more obstructions in the next succeeding belt, which the wind had mostly failed to overthrow, consisting as it did, of sapling growth, and dwarfed trees, some of which, so large were they at the ground and so short and aged in appearance, reminded one of that singular, scriptural expression of "a child a hundred years old." But when they came to the full grown woods, or what was, an hour before, a tall and flourishing forest, they found their way everywhere beset with the most formidable impediments to their progress. Now they would encounter a wide swath of prostrate trees, which some more powerful

vein of the wind, making a clean sweep through the woods, had levelled to the earth in one vast, tangled, wedged and bristling mass, over which they could only force their ways with the most extreme toil and difficulty. And now they would come on to a tract, where the tempest, striking in less concentrated power, or in more irregular swoops, had uprooted and hurled to the earth countless individual trees and left them lying scattered over a wide space, and pitched about in every conceivable manner and direction. The crossing of this last named piece of storm-smitten forest, was also, though less so than that of the former one, a work of time and toil to our persevering excursionists. But they accomplished it at last, and came out into the first inhabited opening, or farm of the settlement, of which they were in quest, to be met with in their course from the mountain. Here in the open field they found evidence of the power of the wind even more striking than anything of the kind they had noted in the forest. Now they came upon a large hemlock log forty feet long and nearly two in diameter, which had lain for scores of years imbedded so deeply in the compact earth as to leave only a small portion of its upper surface visible, but which had now been torn from its bed and carried several rods up a steep hill by the amazing force of the blast. And now they came across boulders of granite weighing probably thirty tons apiece, wrenched out of their deep beds and rolled, or carried over uneven ground to positions eight or ten rods distant.

After pausing a while to note these remarkable exhibitions of nature in her wild paroxisms, our party proceeded along on their way through a straggling coppice, and soon emerged into the more cultivated part of the

farm, where they expected to find the usual buildings, though perhaps in a shattered condition. After going a short distance further, and reaching the top of a swell, which commanded a view of the whole opening, Deter, having been glancing around with a surprised and puzzled expression, stopped short and exclaimed —

"Well, now, if this don't beat all nature flat. What in the name of wonder has got the house? I can swear there used to be one on this place. Yes; and I can swear, too, I saw it, today, from the top of the mountain, just before the hurrycane pitched into it, so like a bull at a gate. But now no sign of a house, nor even so much as a hen coop, is to be seen in the whole opening. It is all a plaguey mystery to me, I vow."

"Ah! here is the solution of your mystery, and perhaps the greatest wonder we have yet seen," cried Conrad, who, attracted by some unusual appearance, had hastened forward several rods ahead of the rest.

The others hurried up to the spot; when all paused and looked at the scene, to which the speaker was directing their attention, with wonder and amazement. There stood, undisturbed, the walls of a house-cellar, within which was strown over the bottom a quantity of bricks, mingled with dry and freshly ruptured mortar, that were evidently the remains of the lower portion of a chimney; while the tops of the walls, the ground around them, and the chip-yard in front, were as effectually cleared of all loose dirt and rubbish as if they had been subjected to the severest application of rake and broom.

"Yes, there stood the house," said Deter, "and by Gimini! only look there! it has been swept off by the wind as clean as a hound's tooth!"

"Can that be possible?" remarked Conrad. "It almost surpasses the bounds of belief."

"And yet it is indeed so," responded Sloan, whose eye had been tracing the path of the wind. "Yes; and yonder you may see the proof of it," he added, pointing to the border of the woods some sixty rods distant, where in the top of a large, tall tree, was seen lodged a long, heavy beam, which must have been one of the sills of the house, dropped, or torn from its place, in the passage of the upwhirling building over the forest.

"But the family?" rejoined the former. "What an awful fate must have been theirs if carried up in the building."

"I should hardly think they were," said the latter. "They might have had warning enough to allow of their escaping through the doors, or they might have fled to the cellar and cowered under its walls till the gust was over and then have gone to the next house, where we shall probably find them."

"Let us proceed there, then, at once," said Conrad. "I shall feel uneasy till I know their fate. Besides, I am anxious to reach the place we are seeking."

"That will soon be done, now," responded Deter. "For the very next house is the one where I saw the man I took to be Doctor Tindall. So, if that be the order of the day, come on — I will lead the way."

On this, they all started out into the road, which, after winding some distance round an intervening hill, brought them out very near the house in question. The house was unroofed, and the other buildings were scattered in ruins over the adjoining grounds. A middle aged woman and several children were standing before the open door of the roofless house, into which two men

were carefully conveying from among the ruins of the barn a wounded and helpless victim of the tempest, closely followed by his weeping wife.

"Who was that wounded man, whom they have just carried into the house?" asked Conrad, approaching and respectfully addressing the woman before the door.

"The owner of the place, Doctor Thomas," she replied.

"Doctor Thomas Tindall, I suspect," interposed Deter.

"Well I don't know about that," she returned. "He has always passed among us here as Doctor Thomas. But he has not lived but a year or two in this place, and not practiced much at that; besides he and his wife, who are all there appears to be now of the family, are very reserved people and live to themselves pretty much. So we may not know so much about them as the folks where they came from. In fact, I have sometimes thought so, at any rate; for there seems to have been some mystery about him; and there has been a rumor about, that Doctor Thomas was not exactly his name, or perhaps all his name as the gentleman here makes it out."

"Then you do not live at this place, I infer?" remarked Conrad interrogatively.

"No," she answered with some emotion. "We live at the place next south of this, or rather did live there, but our house has now flew away, as perhaps you observed if you came that way."

"We did observe it with great astonishment," rejoined Conrad, "and we were very fearful that the whole family living in the house were destroyed with it."

"Well, we should have been," she responded, looking round on her children with a shudder, "we doubtless should all of us been instantly destroyed but for the good Providence that so ordered it, that every one of us was out some distance under a knoll in a pasture picking blackberries at the very time that awful hurricane came which swept off our building, but left us all unharmed. The loss of our buildings, I know will half ruin us, but when I think how we all were so marvelously saved, I forget, wholly forget, to complain."

Those who had carried the wounded man into his room, now came out of the house; when Conrad, briefly explaining who he was, and how he and his party happened to be there, said to the foremost man, who was the husband of the woman with whom he had been conversing.

"Do you think the doctor is very dangerously injured?"

"I do, indeed," replied the man gravely. "And he, who being a doctor may best know, he himself says he has received his mortal wound."

"Where is he most hurt, but first how did it happen?"

"He was in the barn when the tempest struck it, and was so deeply buried in the ruins, that it took us nearly an hour to find whereabouts he was, and then cut and pry away the mass of beams and boards that lay over him, so as to reach and rescue him. He is the most injured internally, having been struck, he thinks, in the chest or pit of the stomach by the end of some of the timbers of the building which came down over or upon him like a crushed egg-shell."

"Is he suffering much pain?"

"None at all, nearly his whole body was paralyzed by the shock he had somehow received. But his mind is clear, and he appears perfectly at ease as to pain of body, though, from some words he dropped, I conceive he may not be exactly so in his mind."

"Will there be any objection to permitting me to see and converse with him?"

"O no, I presume not. There is no one with him now but his wife; and neither of them, probably will object."

"Go in with me, then, and announce me as Esquire Conrad of Lake Village, and this gentleman, as my friend, Mr. Sloan, whom I would have go in with me."

This was done as requested, and the man retired, leaving Conrad and Sloan in the sick-room face to face with the wounded man and his distressed wife.

"Lake Village!" slowly and feebly muttered the Doctor, partly to himself and partly to Conrad, evidently painfully recalling the residence of the latter as just announced. "Lake Village — So then you are from Lake Village," he added, looking up to Conrad with a sad and slightly surprised but not an offended air.

"I am," said Conrad in brief response, as if to invite the other to go on to some more definite remark. "You remember that place, I suppose?"

"Yes," replied the other with visible emotion, after a short pause. "Yes, yes, but too well; for some of its memories come back to me now on my death bed laden for me with the most painful regret. It was there the greatest sins of my life were committed — sins the more aggravated because they went to wrong a helpless and already wronged and cast-off child."

It could now no longer be doubted that the Doctor alluded to his conduct towards the castaway Alice, nor

could it be longer doubted that he was sincerely penitent for the part he had acted. And Conrad, therefore, concluded on a course with the dying man, which, even in all ordinary cases, is ever the wisest one, and which, under present circumstances, he deemed to be especially so — that of entire frankness. Accordingly he candidly stated his object in the present call, and the information he wished to obtain in relation to the case, which he had been employed to investigate, and of which it was supposed the other possessed a more or less extensive knowledge.

After a thoughtful silence of a few moments the wounded penitent responded —

"I am glad you have opened yourself to me so fully, Mr. Conrad; and indeed I am glad you happened here at this sad crisis, both because I can make my confession to one who may so properly hear it; and because I may impart to him information, which by enabling him to succeed in the just cause he has espoused, may prove some reparation for the wrong I did, not only by secreting and sanctioning the wrong inflicted by another, at the first, but by adding to it by my own act."

Interrupting the pause which the other here made as if to quell his rising emotion, Conrad remarked —

"You speak of the wrong inflicted by another, at the first. It is of that, in connection with [the] family origin of the castaway girl, I would first enquire for the better understanding of the case I have engaged to investigate."

"All right, Sir," resumed the other. "All right, that you should know; and I will relate the amount of what came to my knowledge on the subject. Joseph Estabrook, now a few months since deceased, was a very

wealthy man, living in the vicinity of Portsmouth. He had one child, a daughter who was the sole heir of all his wealth, and was brought up in the indulgence of every luxury. But Susan, for such was her name, formed an attachment, and entered into an engagement of marriage with a poor but worthy and enterprising young man, of the name of Charles Coldwood,[1] without the consent or knowledge of her father, who, being deeply imbued with aristocratic notions and family pride, was so offended, on discovering this intimacy, that he drove the young man from his house, and forbade his daughter from all further intercourse and acquaintance with him, either by interview or letter, on pain of disinheriting and casting her out of his family, which, according to his false notions would be disgraced by any such connection or even acquaintance.

"But, somehow, she and her lover found means to continue their intercourse; and its fruits at length became visible, though whether they were the fruits of a clandestine marriage or otherwise could not be known, as she persistently refused to disclose the paternity of her expected child. Her father, on finding his prohibition had been disregarded, set his face against his daughter with the most unrelenting sternness, seeming to think her present situation added very little to the fault she had committed in continuing her acquaintance with Coldwood against his commands, and not appearing to care whether she had been privately married to him or not. And, accordingly, he proceeded at once, to carry out his threat of disinheriting and expelling her from his family. He then made his will bequeathing the great bulk of his property to Kent Wilber, his deceased wife's nephew,

[1] Denominated Mayo in the *Dramatis Personae.*

who had taken great pains to ingratiate himself into his favor by artful flattery and siding with him against his daughter, whom he mentioned in his will only to give her one dollar. Having done this he brought that daughter with one Ann Bishop, a family dependent, for companion and nurse, to my house, in Lake Village, and entrusted them to my keeping till after Susan's confinement, and till he came for them, under injunctions of my keeping the name of her family a secret from all, for doing which, and for all probable expenses, he advanced me a liberal sum of money. In about a month, Susan became the mother of the child Alice, and from that time, for the next ten or twelve months, I heard nothing from her father, Estabrook, except indirectly from Ann Bishop, who corresponded with him, and, to some extent, made me a confidant in regard to his wishes and purposes. At the end of that period, however, I received a letter directly from him, declaring his intention of coming to take Susan and her nurse away in about a month, and directing me to see that the child be weaned, previous to that time, when, on his coming, he would make a new bargain with me about always keeping the child. Punctually, at his appointed time, Mr. Estabrook came in his carriage, driven by one Jo Witters, his usual coachman. He was further accompanied, as far as the village inn, by his new heir, Kent Wilber, in a single team. Having called at my house, and having notified his disinherited daughter and Ann Bishop to be prepared to leave the place with him, without the child, by a given hour, he requested me to repair to the inn to have a talk with him, which I did, and found him in his room, waiting to receive me, in company with Wilber, whom I saw there for the first time. He then, after compli-

menting me for my faithfulness thus far to the trust he reposed in me, proposed to me, that if I would retain the child in my own family, keep the secret of her Origin, allow her common schooling and clothe her decently, till she was eighteen and he would give me one thousand dollars; and further, he would leave in my hands two thousand dollars more to be expended in part for her education at the higher schools abroad, if, as she grew up, she should show sufficient aptitude and the rest, or all, if thought best, to be invested, and given her for her future support. He also injoined me at the same time, that he had executed, and delivered to Kent Wilber, a deed of a farm on Sugar river in trust for her, and to be delivered up to her as her own if she lived to become of age."

"A deed of trust! A farm on Sugar river, to be hers when she came of age!" interrogatively exclaimed Conrad eagerly.

"Mr. Estabrook so stated," replied the Doctor.

"Was Wilber present; and did he appear to acquiesce in the statement?" asked the former.

"Yes, he was present, and heard it without dissenting," answered the latter. "And, at the time, I had no doubt it was all so."

"Was the deed put on record?" again asked the deeply interested lawyer.

"It had not been, when I removed from this part of the country," returned the Doctor. "But after my return I visited the Registry to examine the title of this little place here, which I was then about purchasing; when I was prompted to look for the record of the Estabrook deed to Wilber for the benefit of Alice. And I

soon found it, though it was not, I felt confident, such a deed as had been represented. It was to be sure, a deed of the farm named from Joseph Estabrook to Kent Wilber, yet it contained no clause, which would ever convey it to Alice. I could not but suspect there was something wrong about it. But if so, perhaps the two witnesses to the instrument might set it right."

"Who were those witnesses?" rejoined Conrad.

"Ann Bishop and James Sloan," answer the Doctor. "The gentleman here present, I suspect from his accompanying you here at this time."

"Yes, I am the same man," quietly remarked Sloan, "and perhaps I may also venture to say, Mr. Conrad, that Kent Wilber is the same man who called on you at your office, and made you the suspicious proposal you so wisely rejected. He is evidently on the move. Look out for him. I know him of old."

"And so do I, to my sorrow and ruin," resumed the Doctor; "for the most humiliating of my disclosures yet remains to be told. From my first introduction to Wilber, he took great pains, in his wheedling way, to gain my friendship and confidence. While Alice was with me, he came to Lake village, at least once a year, to see me, making suggestions and throwing out hints about the management or disposal of the little girl, at each visit, which I could not, or at least would not understand. At last he came out with the proposal, backed with all the cajolery of which he was master, that I should privately take the girl away and give her to the Shakers, and that I could then appropriate to myself the fund Mr. Estabrook had placed in my hands for her benefit and nothing would ever be said about it; while the girl herself would always have, with the Shaker

family, a good and safe home, and never be mortified by hearing anything about her disgraceful origin. And, alas! I weakly and wickedly yielded to the tempter. Under false pretences to Alice, I carried her away, and, under equally false names and statements, gave her to the Shakers as their own forever. Feeling guilty for the act, and fearing it should become known to my disadvantage in my village, and perhaps to Mr. Estabrook, who, aside from his foolish family pride and aristocratic prejudice, which had led to his cruel treatment of his daughter, was a kind and liberal man with a high sense of honor, — feeling and fearing all this, I sold out at the village and removed to the West. There, as if in retribution for my conduct, nothing prospered with me. A blight settled on me and all I did and had. My own and only daughter, of about the age of the injured Alice, sickened and died. I went into speculations and lost not only all the money belonging to Alice but the greater part of my own, and, returning a self-condemned and dispirited man, bought, with what I had left, this place where I only hoped to pass the rest of my days in obscurity and unknown to all who had ever seen me. Such, I grieve to say, has been my shameful course towards that innocent, doubly wronged girl. It was no justification for me, that I was instigated to it by that grasping and heartless man, who has contrived to rob her and her mother of their birthrights. And I would gladly make restitution, if I could. But this small, out-of-the-way place, not worth a thousand dollars, is all I have. You might perhaps attach and hold it, or a part of it, on a suit in behalf of Alice; but I hope you will be merciful to my wife here, who, in a few hours now, will be a helpless widow."

"Do not indulge in a single fear on that account," responded Conrad, visibly touched at the remorseful and humble words of the wretched Doctor. "Not a dollar of this property shall ever be taken from Mrs. Tindal. Any attempt of that kind I would resist to the last extremity."

"O, if you would!" exclaimed, with convulsive sobs, the distressed woman, who had thus far sat silently weeping by the bed-side of her dying husband. "And O, if you knew how I resisted all that has been done — how I loved that good, good girl; and how I grieved to have her taken from me, you would pity, but never injure me."

"Then you will have no more to fear from her than from me, now her engaged lawyer," said Conrad.

"O no, no; for she is as kind as she is beautiful," warmly rejoined the other.

"All such apprehensions being thus quieted," resumed the former, "I wish to ask the Doctor one or two questions more, and I am through with him."

"I will answer them, if I can," responded the Doctor.

"Very well, then," observed Conrad. "I will first ask where Ann Bishop at present resides?"

"At Newport, I have somehow learned," was the reply.

"And next, as my last inquiry," resumed the lawyer. "Do you feel confident that Mr. Estabrook stated that he had deeded to Kent Wilber the Sugar River farm in trust for the benefit of Alice and to go to her when of age, and that Wilber heard the statement without dissenting?"

"Yes, confident of both," answered the Doctor. "And Wilber as much as admitted to me the same in some of his subsequent visits to Lake Village."

"That settles it, in my mind," rejoined Conrad confidently. "Either that record was made from a false copy, or the deed itself was mutilated."

"Mutilated," said Sloan in a half whisper.

"Very likely," rejoined Conrad. "But whether that or the other, my course is decided. I shall bring suit for that property, and what is more, I will have it yet for Alice."

"I hope so," said the Doctor in a voice of increasing feebleness. "But I warn you that you will not effect it without a desperate resistance; for I can hardly tell what that intriguing and wicked Wilber will not do to defeat you."

"You now understand the reasons I had for my caution, Mr. Conrad," remarked Sloan. "You have, however, learned enough to make a beginning without me. But let me suggest to you not to summons your witness till the day, or day before, trial, and then add Jo Witters to the number."

"I will heed your request. But now let me read to the Doctor what I have written," replied Conrad, who, with implements he took from his pocket, had taken down all such points in the confession as he thought might be pertinent to his case, in the form of a deposition.

This he did, obtained the willing signature of the Doctor to it, and being a magistrate, administered the usual oath to its truthfulness. And when all was done they left the fast failing man to the melancholy fate which a few hours more were to seal forever.

CHAPTER VIII

ON THE same day, on which occurred the fearful and melancholy events narrated in the two preceding chapters, there was a large and lively picnic gathering in a beautiful grove on the western side of the romantic Sunapee. The party had been mostly collected from the farmhouses and hamlets of the surrounding country, and were beginning to indulge unrestrained in their rustic amusements and conversations; when the company, especially the female part of it, were thrown into considerable commotion by the unexpected arrival of several fashionable couples from the then gay and growing village of Newport, some eight or ten miles distant from that point on the lake. Among the new arrivals was a Miss Salina Simson, the reputed heiress and would-be belle of that place, who, from her supercilious bearing very evidently felt that she was fully entitled to all the homage she had received there at her home of village greatness, to make up which will generally be found many a

> "Tim Gawky, lately from the woods,
> From rolling logs now roll'd in goods."

and many a

> "Maria Ann, just from the wheel
> And spinning wool to street-yarn grew.
> And talk'd affectedly genteel,
> And thrum'd guitars, and tried her hand at Songs too;
> When, ten to one, she never knew
> What part of speech gentility belongs to."

Among these new arrivals, also, came, for reasons best known to himself, Kent Wilber, the questionable gentleman already made known to the reader, together with Lawyer Chapin, Conrad's old competitor awhile at Lake Village, and a flaunting young merchant, an ardent suitor of Miss Simson. Among the original party, or those first assembled for the picnic, were, as may have already been inferred, the Wakeley girls, as they were generally called: Lucy Wakeley, and her foster-sister, Alice, our long neglected heroine. They had come with a young farmer of their neighborhood, who had brought them with his sister in a double team. Alice was here, as with every other company with whom she ever mingled, a peculiar favorite; for aside from her high moral and intellectual qualities and sweet, winning manners, she

> "Was one the beauty of whose eyes
> Was evermore a great surprise."

It was not surprising therefore that she almost at once attracted the observation of the Newport company, and especially of the gentlemen composing it, who, to the visible disgust of some of their ladies, soon began to ogle and maneuver for a chance to approach her. And it was not long before she became conscious that she was the object of this ill-bred scrutiny, which not a little disturbed and annoyed her. She remembered having seen Wilber at Doctor Tindal's, several times, when a small girl, and she also remembered how much she then disliked and avoided him. And now, on this renewed sight of him, her former aversion instantly returned, and, without being able to give any satisfactory reason, even to herself, for it, she instinctively shrank from his pres-

ence. Of the puffy and pompous lawyer Chapin, and the starchy young merchant, she conceived, though neither of them were at all to her taste, no other real dislike, than what arose in her mind from seeing them intimate with Wilber. But that was sufficient to place them, in her mind, in the same category; and she determined that, if she could anyway decently avoid it, she would form no acquaintance with either of them. For, as already intimated, she was precisely in the condition which the poet ascribed to the hater of Dr. Fell — a condition which, as absurd as it sounds, is applicable to many more people than is generally supposed.

> "The reason sure I cannot tell
> But I don't like thee, Dr. Fell."

In order to escape the annoyances, to which she found herself thus subjected, she quietly and unnoticed by all, except her sister, withdrew from the spot she had been occupying, and passing along some rods outside a cluster of low evergreens, which intervened between her and the company, paused close behind the natural screen she had thus selected, and seated herself on a small rock, that she might at least enjoy a little respite from prying observation. But she was not allowed to enjoy her coveted exemption but a few minutes before she was disturbed by voices but a few yards distant, on the other side of the bushes. She could not but listen, and could not but hear what was said. She soon became appraised that they were Miss Simson and one of the girl cronies that came with her, a Miss Jemima Jones, who was secretly setting her cap for lawyer Chapin. They had retired, it would seem, to criticise the company they had left, talk scandal and especially to give

vent to their spleen against the innocent Alice who had engrossed the observation of their gentlemen, which belonged, they appeared to think exclusively to themselves.

"What an ill-dressed, countrified looking set of girls they are!" said Miss Jemima, at that stage of the conversation it concerns us to repeat.

"Yes, all perfect frights," sneeringly responded Miss Salina. "They have no more idea what is fashionable or unfashionable, I suppose, than them blackbirds that are hopping about so cute on them bushes there by the lake."

"Jest so, Salina. And then there is that Alice Wakeley, or Alice something, that sets herself up for a great beauty, I have heard. Did you see her?"

"Yes, but did n't see her beauty. If she has any, it must be invisible to the naked eye, as they say about other doubtful stars. What do *you* think about it, Jemima?"

"Te! he! he! You are always so witty and severe, Salina! But I think jes exactly as you do. I don't see what anybody can see in her that 's handsome. But you saw how our gentlemen seemed to admire her."

"Well, perhaps they would admire us in the same way, if we had a stain or two resting on our births."

This last spiteful remark of the envious Miss Simson, cut Alice to the heart. She would hear no more; but slipping noiselessly from her covert, she made her way to a screening shade on the bank of the lake, where she sat down on a mossy hillock and wept bitterly. But in a moment more her watchful and affectionate sister, Lucy, stood before her, and, with a look of sympathetic emotion and yearning tenderness, enquired — "Alice!

O, Alice, dear Alice, what *is* the matter? What can have happened to grieve you so?"

"I have had my feelings wounded, Lucy, more deeply than I could bear," replied the weeping Alice, trying to quell her sobs and tears.

"Wounded! Wounded by what? Tell me, Alice."

"By something I overheard — could not help overhearing up here on the Picnic grounds a few minutes ago. But I can't repeat it, Lucy. Don't ask me to repeat it now, my sister."

"I will not, if it would pain you. But how can I comfort you, what can I do for you, Alice?"

"Nothing, nothing Lucy. I thank you. But stay; now I bethink me you can, and I wish you would. I wish you would go back, see all our company — that is, I mean Mr. Blakely and his sister, with whom we rode here, and get them to come here separately. I don't feel as if I could possibly go back to the grounds to encounter the ill-bred ogling of those Newport *gentlemen*, as they appear to esteem themselves, nor the pitiful spite of their ladies, and I would propose to our company to take a boat ride on the lake as the best method we could take to get away at this time, without causing any remarks."

All this, under the prompt and prudent management of Lucy, who readily appreciated the feelings of her idolized adopted sister, having closely conjectured what she must have overheard to cause them, was, in a very short time, brought about; when Alice, who had, by this time recovered her composure, laid before her now fully assembled little party her project of an excursion on the lake. And her slightest wish being always a law to them, so loved and respected was she by her acquain-

tances, the proposal was cheerfully accepted by them, and young Blakeley was dispatched for a boat to the farm-house on the lake shore to the North, some forty rods distant; where he had left his team, and where he had noticed a good boat moored to the shore. And being successful in obtaining the desired skiff he was soon back to the rendezvous of the party, when the girls at once embarked with their satchels of tidbits which, at the suggestion of Lucy, they had brought down to the lake with them, so that they would have no occasion to go back to the grounds, but might take their picnic dinner in the boat or at such shady landing on shore as they should find it convenient to approach.

The oarsman now pushed from the shore, and, setting his course towards the most northerly of the two headlands, or capes, on the opposite side of the lake, between which set in the long, deep, narrow bay already described, he sent his light craft rapidly ahead till he had put the distance of half a mile between it and the shore; when, being clearly beyond the hearing of the company left there, he slacked up, and the party fell into an unrestrained and pleasant conversation. After enjoying their social chat awhile, the girls struck up Moor's simple but beautiful Canadian Boat song, then just coming in vogue; and while their silvery voices were ringing out over the silent waters, their oarsman again moved forward, and, with oars rising and falling responsive to the strains, he kept steadily on his way until he struck the wooded headland, at which he had been directing his course. There they all landed, and selecting a smooth, shady spot within the borders of the woods, and temporizing small tables and seats from the clean flat rocks that abounded in the near vicinity, they

spread out their eatables and sat down to their sylvan meal, which was partaken with keen enjoyment by them all, and which to Alice especially brought, under the circumstances, a lively realization of the proverb of the wise man —

"Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith."

After their pleasant repast was ended, the party began to discuss the question of an immediate return to the other side of the lake. But Alice having expressed a wish first to obtain some pond lilies, and Blakeley having informed her that he knew of a spot a short distance up the bay, where her wish could be gratified, it was at once decided by all the young ladies to row out to the indicated locality in search of that beautiful flower, which, to the credit of the sex, is regarded as their favorite emblem of purity as well as representative of floral beauty. Accordingly they re-embarked, and their oarsman having again put his boat in motion, they soon found themselves passing over the submerged lily beds, as was evinced by many an opening bud of spotless white, that had shot up on their long, attenuated stems from the bottom, and were now gracefully reposing on the blue surface of the water, like stars spangling the azure firmament. And it was here, while the companions of Alice were eagerly engaged in plucking up lilies over the sides of the boat and Alice herself was reaching over the stern and attempting to secure a very beautiful one which had attracted her attention, that they were taken by surprise by the before unnoticed approach of the party of Conrad, whose boat passed so near as to enable him to grasp the sought flower and gallantly present it to the fair seeker, as we have briefly described in a former

chapter. We there spoke of the marked impression which the incident made on him, intimating that the impression was apparently mutual between the giver and receiver. It was so. As she looked up and encountered his earnest gaze, a visible sensation, followed by a bewildered expression, and then by a deep blush, chased each other over her beautiful countenance. The words of thanks she had commenced uttering, died on her lips, her eyes dropped, but only to be involuntarily raised, the next moment, to look after him as he was passing away, and be again encountered by the same gaze, which brought another blush to her face.

The first feeling of Alice as the stranger and his boat departed, was one of deep chagrin and vexation at the exhibition of the emotions which she was conscious she had made to him, and of which he must have known himself the cause. This, however, did not prevent her from covertly placing the lily he procured for her in her bosom. Her next feeling was one of curiosity to know who he was; and, turning to her sister, she shyly and in a low voice asked,

"Who could he have been, Lucy — can you guess?"

"Which he do you mean? There were three of them in the boat," replied Lucy, half playfully — half wonderingly.

"Why the one," returned the other, hesitating in visible embarrassment — "the one that — well, any of them."

But instead of immediately answering the question which had been asked her, Lucy, after a searching glance at the face of her sister, and then letting her enquiring eyes fall to the half concealed treasured lily below, while

all those previously collected had been carelessly thrown aside, significantly exclaimed, "Alice!"

"Don't, Lucy, in mercy don't," returned the other, with the deprecating look of a detected culprit.

"Well, well, Alice, I won't," responded Lucy. "But about the man you meant, I don't know who he was. Perhaps Mr. Blakeley does — why not ask him?"

"I can't," answered the former.

"Then let me ask him," said Lucy.

"No, no," hastily returned the other. "No, let it all drop — why need *I* care to know?"

"Sure enough, you two being entire strangers to each other," said Lucy with an air which told she pretty well comprehended the situation of affairs. "But I thought you —"

"Not another word," interrupted Alice — "not another word, Lucy. Let it all drop and be forgotten."

Thus ended the half whispered conversation between the loving sisters which had been carried on less by words than mutually appreciating glances.

In consonance with the supposed wishes of the party, Lucy now suggested that perhaps they had better soon start on their way back to the West side of the lake. But others expressing themselves as in no hurry to return, the party lingered nearly an hour longer in the vicinity of the spot, during which Alice might have been seen often furtively glancing up the bay, in the direction which the stranger's boat had taken, but whether she was looking for his return, or whether some new and pleasant association with the spot made her, as she appeared to be, reluctant to leave it, might be enquiries, perhaps, which a due respect for the secrets of the female heart, should deter us from making. The party,

however, at length got under weigh, and, after a leisurely row of about another hour, found themselves within a quarter of a mile of the Picnic grove; when Alice, at the sight of the place, for the first time for hours, recalled the wound which she had there received, but which had been nearly obliterated from her mind by that other wound of an opposite character subsequently received in her meeting with the stranger as already narrated. Enough of the old wound, however, still rankled in her bosom to make her wish to avoid the place where it had been inflicted. Accordingly she earnestly proposed to her companions, that they should proceed at once to the farm-house, harness up their team, and start on their way homeward, remarking, by way of argument, that as it had been very sultry through the day, and as the sky was already beginning to be overcast, there would probably be a thunder storm before night.

The wishes of Alice again prevailing, the oarsman struck in obliquely shoreward in the direction of the boat landing at the farm-house. But they had not proceeded much more than half way there before they were surprised to perceive an unusual darkness, for mid-day, falling in fast — coming and as fast deepening shades upon the water. And looking up they were startled by the sight that greeted their recoiling senses, in the West. A terrific cloud seething and doubling like the black smoke of burning pitch was rolling down upon them with fearful rapidity; while the deep, earth-jarring roar that every moment grew louder and louder on their ears, proclaimed the near approach of no ordinary tempest. Knowing that there would be no safety on the water when the wind struck it, and believing he could not reach the landing before it would do so, Blakeley quickly

turned his boat in towards the shore, where, fortunately, a small beach, extended from the water back a few yards to a sort of cave-like recess, formed by projecting crags. Here landing and hauling up the boat high on to the beach, he hurried the alarmed girls forward to the protecting niche just mentioned, where all took their stand and tremblingly awaited the expected outburst. It came even sooner than they anticipated. The tornado, which, when last seen by them when leaving their boat, one minute before, was miles away now burst with a deafening roar over the smitten ridge a few yards above their heads. And almost at the same instant, a terrible crash, coming from the Picnic Grove, and the taller forests in the rear of it, saluted their startled ears, and caused them involuntarily to turn their eyes in that direction. Whole trees, whirling root over top, a hundred feet in the air, accompanied by the ruins of broken forests, the temporary tables of the Picnic grounds, provision baskets, shawls and umbrellas, were flying out over the lake in a dark commingling mass and strewing as far as the eye could reach the agitated surface of the water. The next moment the fluttering robes of two female forms were seen rising from the earth and borne swiftly forward into the broad top of a thorn-tree, standing on the brink of the water, where they were left fast pinned to the branches of the tree.

"Who are they? Who are they?" simultaneously exclaimed the ladies of our little party, standing undisturbed by the elements that were raging around them, and looking out from their well guarded stand upon the scene transpiring at the grove, which was in plain seeing and hearing distance.

The enquirers were not long left in doubt. A commotion was immediately noticeable in the grove, and the excited voices of friends, rushing to the rescue and addressing them as Miss Salina Simson and Miss Jemima Jones, sufficiently proclaimed the identity of the thus strangely impaled ladies, who, thereupon, finding they were not entirely killed, at once set up loud outcries, Miss Salina being especially vociferous, squalling, like some frightened goose, for deliverance. Being thus appraised who the unfortunates in the tree were, and gathering that only a few scratches were the extent of their injuries, while no others of the company were scarcely injured at all, Alice and her girl companions, smiled very audibly at the ludicrous scene they were witnessing; and Blakeley, seized with the same propensity for merriment, and inexpressibly moved to give a more open and boisterous demonstration of his feelings, called out in a voice that might have been heard half a mile,

"Halloo, there! Do let that animal out of the trap."

The deliverance, so agonizingly prayed for by Salina, was at length effected, mainly by her devoted merchant suitor, who with a delicacy equalled only by his gallantry, having blindfolded himself, groped his way along up the trunk of the imprisoning tree, until above the fair sufferers; when he disengaged them from their thorny lodgement and carefully handed them down from limb to limb till they safely reached the arms of their lady friends standing at the foot of the tree to receive them.

After thus witnessing this scene to its conclusion, the tornado having subsided nearly as suddenly as it came,

our little party again entered their boat, rowed to the landing at the farm-house, disembarked, proceeded at once to their team, and started on their way homeward, cheerily discussing their adventures of the day in which all took a lively part except in the case of their meeting with the strangers while gathering lilies in the bay. When that case was introduced Alice, somehow, became suddenly silent.

CHAPTER IX

Quem sese ore ferens! — VIRGIL
How impressive his countenance!

IN AN open window, tastily arbored with woodbine, and looking out upon a pretty little flower garden, sat pensively musing in the evening twilight, a few days subsequent to the events described in the last chapter, a beauteous girl in the first blushing bloom of her womanhood. It was the parlor window of the neat and thrifty looking abode of farmer Wakeley, whose culture and intelligence had caused him to adorn the room with choice books, instead of gaudy or expensive furniture. And the girl, now its solitary occupant, was Alice, *The Fair Castaway*. In the contemplative mood in which she appeared to be indulging, her elbow was resting on the window sill, and her shapely head was partly resting on her white taper-fingers, while her eyes were ever and anon glancing from the open volume in her lap to an evidently carefully treasured pond lily, that peered over the edge of a water-filled vase, sitting on a small table a few feet in front of her.

The life of Alice had flowed on like some unruffled, sunlit stream, thus far wholly undisturbed by what is called the tender emotion. But she was not conscious that a new feeling had been awakened in her bosom. But the cause of it, which she did not pretend to conceal from herself as the true one, came so suddenly, and was so transient, that she could not bring herself to dignify it by the name of love. And yet what was it? She

could not tell. She could not comprehend it, though she found the haunting image recurring again and again to disturb her.

"How noble his looks! How intelligent and appreciative his kindly glances!" she soliloquised as her mind, while her eyes were resting on the spotless flower before her, involuntarily reverted to the unknown giver. "But why, O, why, should his countenance so linger in my memory? Yes, why? Is there one good reason for it? None! but a hundred against it. O, folly, folly, folly! that I should harbor the intruding thought another moment. I will not, but will tear the unbidden feeling forever from my bosom. And thankful, thankful am I, that I have betrayed its existence to no one, so that it can never be known that it was ever entertained; for even Lucy but dimly suspected it at the time, and her suspicions doubtless passed away with the moment that brought them."

Approaching footsteps now reached her ear, and she hastily turned her back to the flower vase, and, taking up her book, quickly schooled her countenance to meet the expected visitor. In a moment more the door opened; when Lucy entered the room, and, with an animated look, opened the conversation by saying —

"Alice, I have been over to neighbor Blanchard's and had a lively chat about the Picnic with the girls, who, you know were there, and remained until the hurricane was all over."

"Indeed! Well, let us hear what they said about it," replied Alice with a look of interest.

"'O,' said they, 'when the tempest came crashing down upon the grove we thought we should all surely be killed. Trees came thundering to the ground in every

direction around us; and those that were not overthrown, were bowed and bent half way to the earth by the force of the wind; while the boards fixed up for picnic tables and seats, and the rows of evergreen boughs or small trees set along on the sides to shade them, together with our baskets and every loose article we had, were swept away into the lake in an instant. And what was worse — no, not worse, but better still, those two topping, superfinely genteel Newport belles — ' Here the girls burst out into such a fit of laughter that they could not go on with their description."

"Well, it is no matter," said Alice. "They would have added little but what we saw ourselves, I presume. But what did you hear them say about that Mr. Wilber, who annoyed me so. And that brass-faced lawyer, that followed him about as closely as his shadow?"

"O, they had before spoken of Wilber," answered Lucy. "And they said he left the picnic soon as he discovered that our little party had gone over the lake on our boat-ride. But that the lawyer stuck by to the last, frequently going down to the lake shore as if on the lookout for our return."

"That don't amount to much of itself," responded Alice; "but when taken in connection with other circumstances, it at least goes to confirm my suspicions."

"What suspicions?" asked Lucy. "I didn't know you harbored any in particular about Wilber, or anyone."

"I do," replied Alice, "and have, for some time, especially since our excursion to the lake. They have been, however, so indefinite that I thought I would not mention them, even to you. But since then, I have been recalling the memories of my girlhood, and comparing them with the circumstances of this Wilber's appear-

ance at the Picnic, and his extraordinary course there towards me, together with the anonymous note you know I received a week or two ago and particularly a formal letter that came to me from the post office today, in your absence."

"Why, what a string of circumstances you have been putting together, Alice!" exclaimed Lucy in surprise. "But this last letter — Let me see it, Alice. No, begin at the beginning, and go through all the circumstances in the order you have named them."

"I will, Lucy," responded the former. "And in the first place, I have to say, as I think I have before told, that this same Wilber visited Doctor Tindal several times when I lived there, and always noticed me in a way that made me shrink from him instinctively. On these visits he always had long private talks with the Doctor, and from an occasional word I overheard, when they were thus engaged, and their covert glances at me, at the same time, I became pretty well convinced that I was the subject of their conversation. From this, I inferred he was in some way connected with my mother's family and probably had a hand in the treatment I had learned she received; while now he was paving his way to control my destinies, also, to my injury, I believed, but felt not so certain of it at first, as I at length became, after his last visit, which was marked by long private conferences with the Doctor and frequent weeping on the part of Mrs. Tindal, and which was then soon followed by my being carried off under a false pretence and given to the Shakers — a deed of treachery and meanness that I never doubted was instigated by Wilber."

"Parts of that I now remember you have told me before but never so particularly," responded Lucy. "But the next circumstances?"

"Was his appearance at the Picnic, where he had some reason, probably, for thinking he should find me. He has long since, I suspect, traced me through some of the Shaker leaders to my present home. And learning through spies, or accidentally, that the young people in this section were to have a large Picnic on the lake, he supposed I should be among them."

"And suppose he *should* find you there," remarked Lucy. "I can't see what he should expect to do with you."

"Why, you know, Lucy, as doubtless he does, that I have lately come of age," said Alice. "If I stand in the way of any of his property interests in this section he might suppose I should make some move about this time to claim my rights. And he might wish to see if he could not, by renewing his acquaintance with me, get some control over me, or at least judge for himself how much he should have to apprehend from me or my friends."

"It does indeed look so," observer Lucy, with a look of thoughtful interest. "It looks like that, and then that anonymous letter. If that spoke truly about your having rights of property in this section, who so likely to be in possession of it, and be guarding against your claims as he?"

"True, true, Lucy," replied Alice. "You have anticipated just what I was about to say. The man appears to me as if acting under some apprehension that disturbs him. But he need not be troubled on account of any wish I have for any of his possessions, if he will only keep away from me, and cease concerning himself about my affairs."

"Well, I don't know about that, Alice," responded

Lucy. "I fear *I* should not be quite so forbearing. If I supposed anything really belonged to me I would have it, provided it could be honestly obtained. But that brings you to the letter you received, today, don't it?"

"Yes, and you shall have it now," said Alice, drawing from her workbasket the missive in question, which, with an air of scorn slightly curling her finely chiseled lips, she read as follows —

(Outside address) "For Alice
Care of John Wakeley, &c."

(Inside)

"To Alice.

I suppose you are a relation of mine; and understanding that you are dependent for a home on a farmer, who is under no obligation to provide for you; and where you can have, of course, few advantages, I am induced to offer you a home at my house in Boston. And should you be qualified to teach common branches, as I know some country girls are, I can, I think, soon get you a place as a teacher at the South. Write me whether you will come and then I will write you again and explain further, and give directions.

Sarah Chandler"

"There Lucy!" said Alice, as she finished reading the letter. "What think you of that? Is it not a piece of the same web which that restless Wilber has been weaving? Do you not see his finger in that letter?"

"Perhaps so," returned Lucy musingly; "and yet where do you see any necessary connection between that letter and Wilber?"

"I could see it in one word there is in the letter, if in no other," rejoined the former. "That is the word *under-*

standing — "*understanding that you are dependent for a home on a farmer*, &c," the writer says. Now who but Wilber can have traced me to my home with a farmer? And who but him, consequently, could have been the means of her having any understanding at all on the subject? No one. It is another attempt to get me where he can control me, or, what he would prefer, probably, to get me wholly out of the country. Don't you see it in that light, now, Lucy?"

"Yes," answered the other. "At least I see that it all may be as you suppose. But of the letter itself — are you going to answer it?"

"Yes. Indeed, I have already written an answer, but have not yet sent it," replied Alice.

"You have? So soon?" asked Lucy in surprise. "Well, then, read that to me, also, won't you, Alice?"

Without making any objection, Alice then took out and read the following reply to the letter under consideration.

"Mrs. Chandler,

Your letter has come to hand, and its contents received all the consideration I care at present to bestow upon them. Perhaps I ought to thank you for your condescension in writing to me — a mere "country girl," and condemn myself for my lack of appreciation of your offers for my supposed benefit. But after the cruel and wicked treatment my mother received from her relatives, among whom you are pleased to rank yourself, in banishing her from her rightful home, and, then afterwards, tearing her from me, her worse than orphaned infant daughter, and leaving me in the hands of a cold, mercenary man, who, with the connivance of some of those relatives, as I have always be-

lieved, gave me away to the Shakers — after all this, I do not feel very particularly anxious to claim or cultivate their acquaintance. But I do not now at all regret, on my part, that the treatment I have named occurred, as it Providentially resulted in my adoption into a family which has given me such a home and such a kind father and mother, as to leave me not one temptation ever to leave them. I can therefore easily dispense with your offers, and save you the trouble of ever renewing them.

Yours &c, Alice Wakeley."

"O, I am so glad you have answered it in that decided way!" exclaimed Lucy with emotion.

"Why? — why so glad, Lucy?" asked the other with an air of mingled surprise and curiosity.

"Because Alice," promptly replied Lucy, with quivering lip and starting tear, "because I was so afraid there might be something in that letter — some disclosure or some offer to you, which would tempt you to leave us. O how desolate this home would seem to me, if you were gone away, dear, dear Sister."

Alice now looked up with tears starting out responsive to those in the eyes of the other; and the next moment the loving sisters were convulsively locked in one long, mutual embrace, with their heads dropped on each other's shoulders and weeping like children.

After mutely indulging awhile in what to them, for different reasons, was emphatically the grief of joy, Alice sobbingly remarked,

"Never, dear Lucy, will I leave you. O never! never! You, and father and mother Wakeley, are all the world to me."

CHAPTER X

A FEW days after the scene we have been describing transpired at the farm-cottage of Mr. Wakeley, another one of an altogether different character, though no less closely connected with the development of our tale occurred in the neighboring village of Newport. There, in his office, sat lawyer Chapin with all the consequential airs and assumed dignity which he had conceived to have been worn by some Lord Mansfield or other world renowned jurist. Several open law-books were ostentatiously displayed on the table before him, as he was generally careful to see done, when he expected a call from clients, or such as he hoped to so impress by this apparent evidence of his legal researches, that they would some day become such. Having thus prepared himself for company, he was patiently awaiting its arrival at the moment we have introduced him as just described. But he did not have to wait long. In a short time, Wilber, with a disturbed countenance came bustling into the office, hurriedly exclaiming,

"Chapin, the Devil is to pay! I am sued. Here is a copy of the writ they have served on me. Read it, and tell me what it means. I can't comprehend so absurd a proceeding."

Chapin took and carefully read the proffered document, and then superciliously remarked,

"It purports to be an action of simple trespass — trespass on the freehold — on your farm in this vicinity."

"I know," responded Wilber with an unsatisfied air. "But how in thunder can a man commit a trespass on his own farm?"

"Sure enough," rejoined Chapin. "As you say, it is perfectly absurd; and the suit can't stand a minute in any decent court."

"Then why should the suit have been brought, if it is so hopeless a case as you intimate it to be?" asked the other.

"Brought? Why, brought to make business probably," replied Chapin with a significant look. "You see by the copy that Conrad of Lake Village is the attorney. His custom is running rather low these days, I fancy; and he has doubtless trumped up this suit to let folks know that he is not yet quite out of employment."

"I don't exactly know about that," responded the other shaking his head doubtfully. "That Conrad may have considerable shrewdness after all; and if so, he would not be likely to bring a suit unless he saw some chance of succeeding. You must not underrate his capacity. When a man underrates an opponent he is apt to be thrown off his guard, and get tripped up on some point he is not prepared to meet."

"I am not afraid of him," said Chapin with a show of contempt. "I know him of old, and all his tricks of trade. Never fear but what I can handle him."

"And then there is Wakeley," resumed Wilber without appearing to heed the remarks of the other. "Wakeley, who coaxed the girl away from the Shakers and became her guardian. He doubtless put her up to this move, and I should think ought to have known enough not to bring a suit which could only saddle him with a bill of cost."

"Well, he *has* brought just such a suit," said Chapin confidently. "Yes, and I will warrant him he will have to pay costs to his heart's content."

"I trust so, to be sure," returned Wilber thoughtfully; "but we may have work to do to defeat them. They must at least *think* they have discovered some weak point in my case to induce them to take so bold a step. Don't you account for it in that way?"

"No — I don't see it in that light exactly," replied the lawyer. "Nothing is more common than for rejected heirs or would-be heirs of a rich man, when he dies, to make a strike for a portion of his estate, hoping thereby to frighten or drive the true heirs into some compromise; even when they know they have not a shadow of a claim to go on."

"It may be so sometimes, perhaps," said Wilber. "But I can hardly believe that Wakeley, who has been a member of the Legislature and is said to be a candid, honest sort of a man, would so demean himself as to bring a suit of such a character; nor can I quite believe it of Conrad, as much as I dislike him. They must have found some plausible ground to stand on. But what can it be? How is it, Chapin, can the title to real estate be tried in an action of trespass?"

"Well, no — that is not legitimately, though, to be sure, the validity of the title might come in question in certain circumstances," was the reply.

"What circumstances?" asked the other.

"Well," replied Chapin, "suppose the owner of a farm is sued in trespass, and in defense sets up that the action does not apply to him, he being the owner of the premises. And the plaintiff can show that he is *not* the owner. This, of course, would bring up the question of title."

"Aha?" said Wilber. "That, then, is what they are driving at. It was intimated to me, some time ago, that

they were hatching a plot to chouse me out of this farm, and the reason I did not understand their present move, was that I had the idea that real estate titles were only tried by some long chancery suit. But I expected it in some shape, and that was why I requested you to examine the record of my deed at the Registry. You have done this, have you not?"

"Yes, I examined it carefully — all right — not a flaw in the whole. A certified copy of that record presented to the court is your sufficient defense against the world."

"But supposing they offer to introduce witnesses to show there is a defect in the deed itself, which does not appear in the record. What then?"

"Then, I would rely on the well established law, that you cannot go behind the record, which is conclusive in the case. And the court must so decide and shut out their witnesses."

"Then, Chapin, see that you keep them strictly to the law. But you have just admitted that if they can show I am not the true owner of the farm my title at once comes in question. Now how can they show that or try to show it, as I supposed you meant without being allowed to introduce witnesses?"

"Of course they could not. But they must raise a very strong presumption of a defective record, or fraud in the case, before the court would admit parole proof. But that they can't do. And if we should find they had trumped up something sufficient to hang doubt upon, we could summon in the two witnesses to your deed, James Sloan and Ann Bishop were their names, I think. And they, knowing the deed to have been a regularly executed, and consequently a valid one, would give

testimony that would establish it beyond all controversy in your favor."

"But I don't want those two persons summoned. In fact they shall never be permitted to testify in the case with *my* consent."

"Why not? Why should you object?"

"Because I have no confidence in them. James Sloan is one of your cold, cautious calculating fellows, whom nobody can understand and on whom nobody can rely. And Ann Bishop is a self-willed, bigoted old maid, who, if she took a notion would find it convenient to forget everything about the execution of the deed I should want her to testify to."

"Have you any reason to believe these two persons are unfriendly to you, or in any way opposed to your interests?"

"Yes, I think I have reason to suspect them both to be so, and have so suspected for some time. When I came up to Lake village and this place, some weeks ago, several things came to my knowledge which created this suspicion in my mind. And notwithstanding all my uncle had done for them, and notwithstanding their solemn pledges to be always faithful to the interests of his family, I became convinced they were plotting to deprive me of my property in this part of the country."

"Did you suspect any collusion or connection between them and this girl Alice?"

"I did suspect so, or at least that they were aiming to enter into a collusion with her, and make her believe she had some rights in my property here; and then put her up to an attempt to enforce her false claim, with the understanding, doubtless, that in case of recovery, they should share in the plunder."

"That would make them interested witnesses; and, of course, they should be excluded."

"So I thought. And besides that, their hostility to me is such, as I have reason to believe, that there is no telling what they would swear to. If they did not swear to falsehoods, they would so shape their testimony, that it would injure my case. For these reasons they shall never have a chance to testify in the case, if I can help it. And I want you to govern yourself accordingly."

"I understand it now. But you did not tell me the character, and the position of these witnesses towards you at the time you retained me as your attorney to manage your interests in this section."

"No, I did not think it necessary then, having no idea that they would take any immediate action; and before they did so, I thought I would see what I could do towards checkmating the whole movement."

"In what manner did you propose to do this?"

"I proposed to get this Alice some good home abroad, where her unfortunate origin would never be known, and consequently never be brought up to wound her pride, and where she would be much more likely to marry and settle down than to return to create disturbance in my affairs here. And I have so far put my plan in execution as to get an aunt of mine, living in Boston, to write to Alice, invite her to come there; and then a situation as a teacher, or governess, should be procured for her in the South, where her mother had been dispatched by her father, and with my assistance, at the time she was taken from Lake village, nearly seventeen years before, though I thought it advisable that a different location should be selected for the girl. My next step was to see the girl, renew my acquaintance,

get her to admit in presence of some witness, that she had no claim on my property in this section, or elsewhere, or at least judge for myself, after talking with her, whether she had wit and will enough to cause me any trouble hereafter. And it was in pursuance of the last named object, that I took you along with me to the *Picnic* on the lake. You know how that failed, though why she left the grounds, I can't understand, unless she remembered me, and had some dim suspicion of my objects."

"Yes, I remember how provokingly that object was defeated. But how was it about your other movement for getting her out of the country through the agency of your aunt in Boston? Have you ascertained what effect the letter of invitation, &c. produced on her?"

"No. But as the suit in her name has been brought since she must have received the letter, I suppose the invitation was rejected."

"Have you any reason to suspect that this girl's mother has ever written to her, so as possibly to have instigated this movement against you?"

"No. I can think of no means by which the mother and daughter could have discovered each other's whereabouts, and not knowing this, of course no correspondence could have taken place between them."

"But you know the mother's residence, don't you, Mr. Wilber?"

"Not exactly. Her father, after her child was old enough to wean, sent her, under my attendance, to a commercial friend in Charleston, South Carolina, who had agreed to get her the situation of governess in some planter's family in the interior. This was done according to promise. But the letter announcing the fact did not

mention the name of the place where she was located. And from that day she never presumed to write to her father or to any of us of the family, well knowing that to be just what we wanted."

"But had she no cronies or confidants at the North, with whom she once in a while secretly corresponded?"

"I never could ascertain that she had. And still it has sometimes occurred to me that this might be the case. If she has any such confidants with whom she corresponds, I should not be surprised if it should turn out that one of them was this same James Sloan, who was a cousin of that Charles Coldwood, the low-bred fellow that brought the misfortune and disgrace on Susan, the mother of this girl Alice, and was probably the father of Alice herself. Sloan was often in my uncle's employ, and owing to his relationship to Coldwood, probably, was made, as I remember suspecting at the time, a sort of confidant of Susan. And, if he did not help on the affair between her and Coldwood, at least knew all about it, and acting as her friend, he would naturally be one to her daughter. So you now see why he would favor her when her interests were at stake instead of me."

"Yes, yes, I see it now, and your reasons for distrusting his testimony if admitted as a witness. But what further suggestions can you offer to enable me the better to make my preparations for the trial?"

"None of much consequence at present, as I consider the main dangers I have to apprehend will be caused by the two witnesses, Sloan and Ann Bishop. Our first object must be to find the means of managing them. I start tomorrow morning for Portsmouth, where I trust to find some such means for taking the right kind of care of Sloan. Ann Bishop I leave to your managing.

See her and if you find her, as I suspect, opposed to my interests, take discretionary powers to induce her, if she testifies at all, so to testify as not to injure my case. If she hesitates about this, contrive to get her out of the way; and if she will clear out and take some private residence in one of our large cities, where my opposers sha'n't hear from her, till this suit is disposed of, I will pay all the damage it shall be to her, and reward her handsomely besides. I should also see Jo Witters, our old carriage driver, and see what can be made of him. This is all I have to say. Find out about what time the trial will come on, and be sure to write me soon enough to allow me to get here at least the day before the trial."

On this, Wilber departed, leaving Chapin deeply musing on what had been said with a puzzled and dissatisfied expression resting on his cold and repulsive countenance. After indulging in his reverie awhile he rose, and, with an irritated air, soliloquised,

"That man has not told me all he knows. But even what he has said and indirectly admitted, makes out his case worse than I supposed it to be. Well, his money is just as good as that of any other man; and he will find I can charge just in proportion as his work is dirty, for doing it for him."

CHAPTER XI

A THOROUGHLY selfish, cold, cautious and calculating female is an anomaly among women. The great traveler, Ledyard, who had visited and mingled with more different nations and peoples than any other known traveler, somewhere in his book of travels makes the remarkable declaration, that however savage and inhuman the men of the nations he visited, he always found the women humane and disposed to listen to the voice of distress. Other writers have lavished on woman any amount of flattering encomiums and indefinite praise, but it may well be doubted, whether this declaration of Ledyard, in view of his wide and varied experiences, does not constitute the best and highest eulogium ever bestowed on the sex. And yet there are sometimes found, even among our most civilized communities, women of the character first mentioned. And with this class with no great injustice might have been ranked Ann Bishop, whom the events of our tale require to be again introduced.

It was in the afternoon of the next day after the interview between Lawyer Chapin and his employer Wilbur in which the latter disclosed his views and imparted his instructions to the former in relation to the impending trial that Ann Bishop was sitting in her usual room in the small cottage in Newport, which she had the year previous purchased and partly paid for out of moneys paid her by Old Mr. Estabrook for her services in his family and for keeping his family secrets. She had let

into her house a small family who were boarding her for the rent of the house; and she was here living at her ease and in such seclusion, that few of the villagers knew anything about her, and fewer anything of her previous life. She was now about forty; and though comely enough in form and feature, yet her embrowned face and corrugated forehead had destroyed mostly the maiden freshness of youth, and, with the effects of her natural acerbity of disposition, had imparted a repellent severity and harshness to her looks. She seemed to be aware of this, and was now moodily pondering over her lost opportunities for marriage.

"The tool of a rich man!" she soliloquised with an air of mingled scorn and self-upbraiding. "Yes, I have been nothing but the tool of a rich man till all the flower of my youth is gone, and, with it, the best chances of marriage; for suitors, such at least as would have me, would never seek me in that nabob family, for whom I was wearing away all my best days. I have made some money out of it, to be sure, but nothing that can begin to compensate me for the probable sacrifice I incurred. No, and the more I think of it the more I am satisfied with my resolve of a fortnight ago to throw off the trammels and be a tool no longer. And the new movement I then made has already counted as I calculated. A suit has been brought, and a trial is soon to be had, in which Sloan has privately informed me, I may be a witness. If so, my testimony, in spite of all attempts that may be made to bribe or frighten me, shall teach that mean and dishonest Wilber his folly in stopping the yearly allowance the old gentleman made me, and also show him that henceforth I shall bow no more to the setting, but only to the rising sun, which will naturally

shine on me all the brighter for being the first and chiefest instrument in causing it to rise."

At this juncture a gingerly rap on her door aroused her from her meditations; and as she responded with the usual "*Come in*," Lawyer Chapin entered, and, with a consequential air and what he considered a condescending bow, took the proffered chair and said, —

"I have the honor, I presume, of addressing Miss Ann Bishop."

"Yes, if that be any honor to you, or even to me," replied the lady curtly; for knowing the lawyer by sight, and having heard of his having been seen lately with Wilber, she at once divined the character of his business with her, and put herself on her guard accordingly.

Pretending not to notice the lady's cold manner, nor hear the left handed compliment involved in the latter part of her reply, the lawyer proceeded.

"I understand you lived with the late Mr. Estabrook for a long period previous to his death. If so, you consequently must be well acquainted with his affairs, and the situation of the different members of his family, including my friend Wilbur, who heired his estate?"

"And suppose all this were so, what then?" returned the other in the same indifferent tone.

"Well," rejoined the former, evidently a little abashed at the forbidding manner in which he found his approaches received. "Well, in that case, we believe you may know something that may be of service to us. But let me first explain: — Though Mr. Wilbur became heir to Mr. Estabrook's estate he does not hold it all by the tenure. The bulk he received by will; yet a valuable farm in this vicinity he received by the old gentleman's

deed. Now it seems, that some pretended heir, or some one pretending to act for such heir, has brought a suit against Mr. Wilber with the object of getting that farm away from him. And as you were one of the witnesses to the deed, we thought your testimony might establish his title beyond dispute, — that is if you were disposed to testify in his behalf. And if so, we may perhaps summon you to testify at the trial now near at hand."

"You have the right to summons me, I suppose," responded the lady. "But if you do so, you must not complain if I tell the truth, which will be all you want, unless the truth is what you won't like to hear told in court."

"O, of course, we expect you to tell the truth," returned Chapin, a little uneasily. "But there is sometimes a great difference in the *manner*, in which the truth may be told. The witness may testify, plumply to the main fact, as about the execution of this deed which you saw, and which is all you need testify to. And if there are circumstances that make against our side of the case you need not mention them."

"But I thought witnesses in court always took an oath not only to tell the truth, but the whole truth," said the woman promptly.

"Well, yes," replied Chapin, "that to be sure is the form, but it is merely a form, and that part about the whole truth, is not usually adhered to. And nothing is more common than for witnesses to omit what might as well [be] let alone as to be said. In fact not one witness in ten ever lives up to that useless clause of the oath."

"And you would have me testify in that way, would you?" said the woman, turning such a searching glance

on the lawyer as caused him to lose a little of his usual self-possession and hesitate as he at length replied,

"I did not say that exactly," rejoined the lawyer. "We shall only ask you to swear that you saw the deed executed, and after that what you might say would be mere volunteer testimony relating probably to remarks made at the time by the parties, which, it being so long since, you could not remember, and which it would be dangerous for you to swear to."

"Any more dangerous, think you, for me than what you have already said is for you?" significantly asked the lady. "What is that law term applicable to such conversation as yours to one who is to be a witness? *Subordination of perjury* is it? which means, I think, the holding out inducements to pervert or withhold the truth when a witness testified in court? I heard the subject discussed once; and I think the act was made out a crime ranking next to perjury itself."

"How you do misapprehend me," responded the lawyer, evidently a little startled at the remarks of the other. "I have held out no inducements for you to testify one way or the other. I was only suggesting to you a course by which you might safely favor my client's side of the case, which we hoped you felt friendly enough to him to do, especially as it would be so much for your interest."

"For my interest, eigh?" rejoined the former. "What is that expression but holding out inducement to vary my testimony so as to give the case an aspect which the whole truth would not warrant?"

"Ah, I see how it is with you; and it is useless to prolong the conversation," said the baffled lawyer, rising

and, with a curt "good day, madam," leaving the house, muttering to himself as he went, "A tiger! I could see the claws sticking out in every word she uttered. But if she appears at the trial I will have my revenge in a cross-examination that will make her wince."

Being thus completely foiled in his attempt to forestall the testimony of Ann Bishop in any way, he next sought out Joseph Witters, whom he found in a small Livery Stable, which the latter had recently opened.

Witters was an American born Irishman of the middle age, with the usual characteristics of his race, a fresh looking face, blue eye, sandy complexion, and a countenance betokening quick perceptions, a ready appreciation of the characters and motives of others and promptness in action.

"This is Mr. Witters, I conjecture," said Chapin, bowing to the other.

"I am that same, Sir. You have guessed right the first time," returned Witters with a humorous twinkle of the eye.

"Yes," rejoined Chapin, "but I suppose you don't know me."

"Well, I rather think I know you by sight, as the Devil did his hogs," replied the former. "It is lawyer Chapin, I am thinking. You have called to hire a team, or saddle-horse, I presume?"

"No, I don't need either today. I have called to make some enquiries of you," said the lawyer, hesitating as if doubting how he should open his errand.

"Ah?" returned Witters with some seeming surprise. "Well, Mr. Lawyer, here I am on hand — fire away."

"As I understand you lived many years with the late Mr. Estabrook, you of course knew considerable about his property and family affairs — did you not?" rejoined Chapin.

"Well," replied the other, "well, I knew some things and some things I didn't know."

"What were those things which you knew?" resumed the lawyer.

"Well, Sir," answered the other, "I knew he owned a fine span of carriage horses, for I was his coachman. And one of these horses was the best horse I ever saw, the other was as good again as he was."

"Yes," returned the former; "Yes a good pair of horses doubtless. But it was relative to the title of a farm in this region I wished to enquire. This farm Mr. Estabrook deeded to Mr. Wilbur. And I presume you were knowing to the fact."

"It might have been so," replied Witters. "But such things are wholly out of my line of business, so can't be very particular."

"I suppose not," rejoined the lawyer; "Yet you probably heard Mr. Estabrook say he had given that farm to Wilbur. Don't you remember it?"

"Well, don't know exactly. Kinder seems sorter so, and sorter not so — but rather more not than sorter," said Witters.

"I wish you would speak frankly about this," responded Chapin. "I know you must have heard Mr. Estabrook say often that he had conveyed that farm to Wilbur absolutely."

"Did I?" returned Witters. "Do you suppose I did? Well, then I must have forgotten to remember it."

"Your memory," said Chapin, with an air of vexation and rebuke, "must be rather poor."

"Just so," returned Witters. "I have lost two of my front teeth; and since then I can't remember worth a cent."

"I hope you don't mean to treat my enquiries disrespectfully, Mr. Witters?"

"O no — not a bit — but as respectfully as the times will admit. And now, Mr. Lawyer, as you have been rather middling free with your questions, I am thinking it ought by this time to be my turn to ask you a few questions."

"Well, Mr. Witters, though I can't conceive what you can possibly want to know from me, I won't mind listening to a question or two from you — so ask on."

"I will do that same — and in the first place I will just ask you what you are driving at?"

"I don't understand what you mean, Mr. Witters. Please explain."

"Well that is strange — I thought lawyers understood everything and considerable besides. But as it seems one of them at least don't, I will say I wanted just to know your object in coming to me with so many questions, and particularly what use you wished to make of my answers?"

"I should soon have come round to all that, and I will now say by way of reaching the point by the shortest cut, that my friend and client, Wilbur's title to that farm I was speaking of is disputed; and a suit has been brought against him to deprive him of his property. Now as you were knowing to the fact that the farm was duly conveyed to Mr. Wilbur by deed, we thought you would feel disposed, on the trial which is soon to take place, to testify in his favor."

"O, that is it, is it? Very well, so now, Mr. Lawyer, as you have answered my questions, or all I care to ask now, I am willing to quit even with you, and bring our confab to a close."

"O I can't consent to that, Mr. Witters, yet. I have not learned from you anything I wished to know — I wish to ask you —"

"No, no — that ain't fair, Mr. Lawyer. I have not asked you half as many questions as you did me. No, no, I can't allow that no how — so as I said we will shut down on the subject just where we are. Besides that, I have business out, and must go now, and, of course, bid you a good day, Mr. Lawyer."

"Foiled again by Heavens, and that too by a popinjay!" muttered the discomfited Chapin, as he walked away biting his lips in chagrin. "Yes, but Wilbur, who must have known the unpromising material on which he set me to work, shall pay for exposing me to the shame and danger of such an attempt. I will charge him an additional fifty dollars."

Thus terminated the first and second part of the plan agreed on by Wilber and his doubty attorney for tampering with witness. A third part remains to be narrated, that of dealing with Sloan, of which, it will be remembered, Wilber had undertaken the management upon himself. But for this we will take a new chapter as that management was altogether of different character from the part assigned to Chapin, and will be best disclosed by describing the results from which its nature may be unmistakingly inferred.

At this point the author laid down his pen forever. We have, however, summaries of the succeeding chapters that show what the course of the story was to be.

Chapter XII

Sloan's house — summoned to the trial the next day. Has seen two suspicious fellows watching him for a day or two. Starts for Newport Court and crosses the lake in his canoe — discovers two men in a canoe who pretend to be fishing, but land not far from where he does. Soon gets a glimpse of them among trees following him — shoots a pistol to show that he is armed — they follow him coming out on the road before him. He reaches a river — a branch of Sugar river which is roaring high — attempts to cross on a log — one ruffian is seen on the other side — he follows on the log and tries to throw Sloan off but is thrown off himself and drowned, the other, as Sloan reaches the end of his log, strikes at him but misses — is knocked down himself, bound, confesses who instigated him and is marched to Newport and is put into jail.

Chapter XIII

Mustering for the trial, arrival of Conrad, Wakeley and Alice — the defiant airs of Chapin — preliminary arguments. Chapin produces his copy of record of the deed and claims judgment. Conrad demands to see the original deed, intimating fraud or defective record. Chapin, by direction of Wilber, refuses to produce the deed. This produces a pause in the proceedings.

Chapter XIV

The trial is resumed. After consultation, the Court decided that this deed must be produced, or witnesses would be admitted for plaintiff. As a less danger Wil-

ber decided to produce the deed, which was handed to Conrad, who showed that it was one fourth shorter than usual deeds — that it had been folden in four folds and that the central one had been removed and the rest carefully glued together. The court then decided to admit the witnesses Sloan and Ann Bishop, who testified that there was a clause giving the farm to Alice if she lived till of age when they signed as witness. Conrad also introduces Dr. Tindall's affidavit. Chapin then fell to abusing which made them swear more positively and plainly hint that Wilber was in wrongful possession of his whole property, owing to a subsequent will. The court and jury then decided the case for Alice. Wilber then threatened Conrad, who told him of the man in jail whom Wilber had instigated to murder him, and that he would prosecute Wilber if he did not submit to the decision without appeal, which he did in deep alarm for himself.

Chapter XV

Conrad after the trial is introduced to Alice — the awkward meeting resulting in the promise of the former to visit Wakeley the next day to get acquainted with his family and arrange future operations in view of the unexpected developments of the trial in regard to the probable further rights of Alice. A love passage between Conrad and Alice, in which she does not deny her love but is determined never to marry because she thinks there is a stain on her birth. It is agreed that he and Wakeley shall immediately go to Portsmouth to ascertain whether Old Estabrook made a new will as hinted by Sloan and Ann Bishop, and if so to find the will and put it away to be proved.

Chapter XVI

Conrad, Wakeley and Sloan go to Portsmouth. Will discovered in possession of Sloan, who produces it. Manley Executor, Sloan, Ann Bishop and Jo Witters witnesses — property, except a legacy of $5000 all given to Alice and her mother and all to go to Alice at last — Manley and they all go and present it to Probate Court, who decides that personal notice to Wilber sufficient for setting the day for proving it one week ahead, and all return to prepare for the Probate of the will accordingly.

Chapter XVII

Trial on the Probate of the New Will. The minute testimony of Ann Bishop detailing the great change in Old Estabrook during the last months of his life — his horror of conscience and penitence for disinheriting his daughter and determination to restore her before he died — and making a new will accordingly, with injunctions to keep it secret from Wilber till after his death. The testimony of Sloan to the same effect who was sent for by Estabrook to enquire about Susan's daughter and who was there when the last will was made and with Ann Bishop and Jo Witters signed as witnesses.

Chapter XVIII

Trial of Will continued. Desperate attempts of Wilber to impeach the witnesses by hired witnesses of his own. Conrad substantiates them by men of character and by cross-examinations unmasks these hired witnesses and exposes Wilber and shows him liable to pro-

secution for subornation of perjury — then the attempt to show the testator insane, and his failure. Chapin's reckless and abusive course, and the case at last brought to the arguments of the lawyers.

Chapter XIX

Scene opens at a planter's house in South Carolina — a woman in mourning. It was Susan the governess in the family. She has had a vision and warned that she was wanted at her old home in the North. She starts her romantic and perilous voyage and chapter closes as she sails into N. Y. harbor.

Chapter XX

Scene in Algeria. Charles Coldwood a prisoner to a pirate chief. His previous adventures — shipwreck and capture — at length escapes and sails for home. Voyage till in sight of Boston.

Chapter XXI

Susan and Coldwood meet in a room in a tavern in Portsmouth but do not recognize each other. They are aroused by a great rejoicing around the Court house and Sloan rushes in proclaiming to the landlord and others there that the court had established the last will cutting off Wilber only with a mere pittance of the estate and giving the whole (except that) to Alice and her mother. Wakeley, Conrad and Alice next enter. Mutual recognitions follow through Sloan. Susan shows proof of her legal marriage to Coldwood and the Castaway Alice shown to be not only a great heiress but a legitimate

daughter, and she and Conrad are thereupon betrothed by the consent of mother, father (Capt. Coldwood now) and Wakeley. Conclusion in happiness all round — a restored husband and father supposed to have perished at sea — a restored mother and restored daughter making the double reunion.

APPENDICES

A

Chief Events of Thompson's Life

1795 October 1. Born at Charlestown, Massachusetts.

1800 Moves to Onion River, Berlin, Vt.

1820 Graduates from Middlebury College. Becomes private tutor in a wealthy family in Virginia. Studies law.

1822 Meets Thomas Jefferson.

1823 Admitted to the bar. In 1823 or 1824 begins practice in Montpelier, Vt.

1830 Clerk of the legislature.

1831 August 31. Marries Eunice Knight Robinson.

1835 Publishes *The Adventures of Timothy Peacock* and *May Martin*.

1837 Judge of Probate for Washington county.

1838 One of the four incorporators and the first secretary of the Vermont Historical Society.

1839 Publishes *The Green Mountain Boys*.

1843 Clerk of the Supreme and County Courts.

1846 Secretary of the State Education Society.

1847 Publishes *Locke Amsden*.

1849 Editor of the *Green Mountain Freeman*.

1851 Publishes *The Rangers*.

1853 Secretary of State of Vermont.

1857 Publishes *Gaut Gurley*.

1860 Publishes *The Doomed Chief* and the *History of Montpelier*.

1864 Publishes *Centeola*. Begins *The Honest Lawyer* about this time. Leaves it uncompleted at his death.

1868 June 6. Dies from a paralytic stroke.

B

Unpublished Letter from Jared Sparks to Daniel P. Thompson[1]

Cambridge, May 17th. 1852.

Hon. Daniel P. Thompson.

Dear Sir,

I have no reasonable apology to make for not having written to you long ago, and thanked you for the pleasure and instruction I derived from the perusal of the "Rangers," and especially for the Dedication by which you have honored me. The narrative and the description in that work present a vivid picture of the spirit of the times, and portray in a striking manner the customs of the people, and the remarkable incidents which occurred in the southern parts of Vermont in the opening scenes of the Revolution.

Your remarks on the massacre of Jane McRae, which came to hand some time ago, I am persuaded are founded on a true state of facts. I was perfectly convinced of the truth of what was told to me by Mr. Standish. He was in the full vigor of mind and body. He was certainly present at the massacre, and saw everything that took place: and the details of such an event must have made too deep an impression to be erased from his memory. He was at the same time taken by the Indians, and conveyed as a prisoner to Burgoyne's camp. His account agreed in all the particulars with what was said to me afterwards by General Morgan Lewis, who was at Fort Edward when the massacre occurred. Mr. Lossing, as you will have seen, does not aim at profound historical research, but his book is amusing, and derives a good deal of value from the drawings, which seem to be executed with a considerable degree of accuracy.

Please to accept my thanks for your kind notice of the Letters on the Mode of editing Washington's Writings. The spirit and temper of the attacks indicated anything but a

[1] In Sparks Collection, Harvard Library.

desire for truth or justice, and it was my object to present the matter in a full, fair, and candid light before the public. I am gratified that it has appeared to you in that light. Lord Mahon was undoubtedly tampered with (to use an expression of his own) by the busy-bodies in this country.

I am, dear Sir,
with great respect and regard,
faithfully yours,

JARED SPARKS.

C

Letter from Daniel G. Thompson to the Editor of the "Vermont Watchman" [1]

Mrs. Daniel P. Thompson.

Editor of Vermont Watchman : — Mrs. Daniel P. Thompson died at this place [Madison, Wisconsin] March 22, 1894, at the age of eighty, today (March 26, 1894) being her birthday. . . . She was a woman for whom the word "neighbor" never lost its old and Christian significance. For friendliness she was always prepared, for enmity never.

My mother was born in Troy, Vt. March 26, 1814; her husband Oct. 1, 1795. Her family name was Robinson and her first name Eunice. She was married August 31st., 1831, by the Rev. Mr. Chandler at Hardwick, Vt. I have been told she was a very beautiful girl, and, if a portrait painted by Mr. Hunter soon after her marriage is any evidence, such was the fact. . . . Their early married life was identified with the house on the hill, with its Ionic columns, and surrounded by trees, which my father built for a home and in which our family was reared. My mother had that comfort which, I think, a young wife always desires, of building a nest. She had the opportunity of planning a house, of beautifying it, of adding treasures to its furnishing from time to time, of planting her favorite shrubbery, and even of setting out a tree for each of her children, or giving them more than one, if she thought they particularly deserved it. Thus during many years, as my father grew into the fullness of his life work and increased in influence and achieved fame, her lot was contented and happy. Death came into the family circle but twice, — once to take away the youngest son scarcely a year old, and once to call a daughter of sixteen, whose loss was hard enough for both parents to bear.

As time went on, however, during the failing years of my father's life, less fortunate circumstances arose. My father

[1] Never before reprinted.

discovered that the law is a jealous mistress and that literature has few pecuniary rewards. Domestic cares increased, money was not plenty, sickness appeared, and the dark side of life cast its shadows. But Mrs. Thompson bore her burdens bravely, kind friends were not wanting, and she passed through the trials of my father's last days with health substantially unimpaired. Then the clouds broke away and the sun shone forth again. A new home was made for her which opened a new era for her life, although it was difficult to break the associations of her Montpelier residence. Many dear friends were to be left and the parting was sad. Mrs. J. W. Ellis and herself were like sisters, and no sisters could have been more warmly attached. Others, friends of the neighborhood and of the church, united to her by bonds of companionship and mutual assistance, were scarcely less dear. But my mother went cheerfully to her daughter's home at Madison, where she lived twenty six years under circumstances much more comfortable than she had ever before enjoyed. Her life was only burdened by the illness and death of her daughter, who died in 1883. After this my mother continued to live as the mistress of her daughter's home, preserving it for her daughter's husband and her own grandson, growing up to manhood. She had everything to make life agreeable, wanting for nothing in the way of material comfort, and possessing a social circle which was ample and delightful. During the last two years she has been materially failing, not from any specific disease but from gradually increasing infirmities of old age. Her sight was impaired, and her activity abated in many directions. During all this time she received the best of care, owing to the undiminished kindness of her son-in-law, Hon. George P. Burrows, and the constant and loving attention of her grandson, George Thompson Burrows, whom she brought up and loved as much as she could have loved a son of her own. . . .

My mother passed away peacefully, in the knowledge that she had filled out the full measure of her days. At her request, she is buried beside her daughter in the cemetery at Madison, where also lies her second son, William. . . . I should characterize her as a society woman, in the New England sense,

of an epoch that is rapidly passing away. She believed in neighborly kindness, in the companionship of the sewing circle, the church, the benevolent society. She was always cheerful, lively, conversational. She never learned, perhaps, that silence and seclusion after all may be the best comforters, but sympathizing with others, she craved sympathy for herself and could not imagine why what was hers should not be common knowledge. Her ideas were that woman should be both domestic and social, and, according to her lights, she did not fail to do her duty nor to contribute to make life happier for all within the sphere of her influence. She was a believer in the gospel of work. Idleness was to her a sin. Her hands always found something useful to do. The last day she sat up she took her knitting work in hand, and during the last months of her life she made rugs for friends in town. Thrifty and careful as a housewife, a true helpmeet to her husband, her thought and her work were also cheerfully given to any one in the community who needed her kindness or her encouraging or comforting words, without thought of return or recompense.

DANIEL GREENLEAF THOMPSON.

Madison, Wis., March 26, 1894.

D

Unpublished Lecture on American Romances, Abridged and Edited[1]

Romances, to subserve any valuable purpose, besides ministering merely to the passing amusement of the reader, should contain either faithful descriptions of nature in the scenes presented and the manners of the actors introduced, or become the medium of instructive thought and wholesome moral sentiment. A novel may be made of some value when either of these requisitions is faithfully and skillfully complied with, but the highest purpose of fictitious writing can only be obtained by a compliance with both. America, in proportion to the other productions of her writers, has produced her full share, and probably an over-share of romances. To say nothing of the floating newspaper stories whose name is Legion, and whose life is generally as transitory as the season which produces them — nothing of the magazine tales, the next higher class in order, that each year brings forth by hundreds to be perused once with about the same interest and profit by their fashionable readers, as that with which younger children engage in the play of odd and even, or Hull Gull, and then be forgotten forever — and to say nothing of the still greater multitudes, which, ambitious of the book-form, have latterly through the medium of the cheap publication system come up, like reptile swarms of Egypt from the stygian abysses of literature as if to devour the remaining youthful virtues of the land — to say nothing of all these and pass them by as unworthy . . . of even the name of literature, to leave all these out of the count, we may safely assert that America has given to the world many interesting and valuable works of fiction, which, so far as artistic skill and powers of delineation are concerned, may well challenge a comparison with those of

[1] The original manuscript of this lecture is in the possession of Mr. Charles M. Thompson. It is undated. Certain portions have been deleted for the sake of brevity. In all that is retained, however, D. P. Thompson's own wording has been preserved, even though the diction and sentence structure seem to indicate a first draft.

the old world. — Cooper, Simms, Paulding, Kennedy, John Neal, and several more of less note in the historical field, and Irving, Hawthorne, Mrs. Sedgewick, and some others, in fictions illustrative of American life and character at large, have all made contributions to this department of literature, which, in our estimation fully establish the fact of the existence of talents in our writers no way inferior to those of Europe, and that it is owing to no lack of genius that they have not given to the world as many works of fiction destined to outlive their century, and find place in the libraries of future generations, as the writers of England, or any other country in the world.

But with all their genius, have these writers, taken in the aggregate, done themselves, their country, or the materials with which they have had to do, much justice? It seems to us they have not. It appears to us that in truthfulness of description, in delineation of the manners, and in the embodying the true sentiments and feelings of the common people, from whom their representatives are drawn, that they have fallen much short of the excellence exhibited in these respects by European writers; and much short of the excellence, which, with their advantages, they might easily have attained.

Cooper, who has gained the highest reputation of any of our American novelists, though confining himself to native scenes and subjects, is anything but a faithful copyist of nature as it really exists in the scenes he works up with so much interest for the general reader. Some of the most animated and important dialogues to be met with in his works illustrative of border life, are made to take place between hunters or Indians on a laborious tramp through a rough and tangled forest; while every one, at all conversant of the habits of woodsmen, well know[s] that men, in making their way through the forest in company, always walk in what is termed Indian file, and, to avoid the back-springing limbs and bushes removed by the foremost, always at such distances apart as to preclude all connected conversation. Any such discussions, therefore, as this writer represents to have taken place under these circumstances, would be impracticable, if men were disposed to engage in them; but they never are; for the sense of fatigue, and the constant attention required in selecting a place for

almost every step over the uneven ground, or over recurring obstacles of the forest — generally take away all inclination to converse, except by an occasional brief question and as brief a reply. And it is only after the company have reached the camp, kindled the cheerful fire, and spread or partaken [of] the rudely prepared meal, that they either can or will engage in much conversation.[1]

We name this only as a sample of the many instances of the kind to be found scattered through the performances of this distinguished American novelist from whose vivid representations so many of our notions of border life have been received. Indeed we doubt whether [if] any person, divested of all knowledge of Cooper and his reputation as a writer, were to take one of his works, travel with it over all the ground it professes to occupy, fall in as near as might be with the same scenes and actors, and then turn from the book to nature before him — we much doubt, we repeat, whether he would ever mistrust that the representations of the one were drawn from the other. Such were once our conclusions, at all events when, in a college vacation, we travelled on foot over all the region bordering Lake George, where was laid the scene of one of Cooper's best works, the Last of the Mohicans, being unable to trace any resemblance between the scenery & face of the country & that exhibited in the book.[2] Nor do we think the sentiments which he puts into the mouths of his actors always appropriate or the natural emanations of American minds, or the feelings he makes them exhibit, such as naturally spring from American bosoms. There is betrayed in nearly all his [performances?] an aim to inspire undue respect for aristocratic distinction, while our national feeling as entertained and

[1] This type of criticism, not uncommon even in Thompson's day, reached its culmination in Mark Twain. It is here of some historical interest because of its source.

[2] Thompson originally wrote "in 1819 or 20" but crossed it out. *The Last of the Mohicans* was published in 1826. Probably what Thompson actually did was to compare his recollection of the Lake George country, which he had explored during a college vacation, with Cooper's description of it in *The Last of the Mohicans*, which he read at least six years after his graduation. Or it is possible that he made another trip through this country in 1826 or later. In either case his memory failed him.

exhibited by the great mass of the people, has found, in our estimation, but a feeble portrayal in the efforts of his pen; and we have long since come to the conclusion that he owes his celebrity far less to his truthfulness to nature and the moral and political soundness which his works tend to inculcate than to the power of his genius.

[Thompson now applies the above criticism to American novelists as a whole.]

Now why is this? Why have our writers done so little justice to our peculiar scenery, our peculiar manners, and the peculiar feelings, principles and cast of character that have obtained under our peculiar and distinctive national institutions? Why do we not meet with, in their works, more and better delineations of our rural every day occupations, of the kinds and methods of preparing our food and raiment, of our crop raising, our felling the forest, logging and clearing our new lands — of our changeful and strikingly contrasted seasons — and the no less striking and peculiar scenes and scenery that attend them? Why do we so generally find, in their works, every person who is made to have common sense clothed in broadcloth; to exhibit affected dignity of manners, or to possess princely wealth, or to have derived his origin from some ancient and honorable family? Why this, when our employments, our seasons, and the scenery of our whole country, are marked with such peculiarities, when so few compared with the mass, that go to make up our national character, have wealth that places us beyond the necessity of some kind of daily labor? And lastly, when one half of us, perhaps, through the whole country, if we could trace our origin, would find, instead of a noble or distinguished lineage, that we were descended from some vagabond law-breaker of the old countries, or a deserter from a British fleet? Why, we repeat, should this be so? We can only attribute it to the effect of the spirit of Foreign literature, which, with the general tone and coloring of its sentiments, and descriptions, our writers have imbibed in their greater anxiety to follow acknowledged standards of excellence than to follow nature, and do justice to their own materials. This effect of subserviency to foreign standards, if its existence be admitted, as we think it should,

is the more remarkable, as it is scarcely, if at all discoverable in any other department of our literature than the one we are discussing — that of fictitious and descriptive writing.

[Thompson now describes the independence of American political, theological, scientific, and historical writing, as distinguished from our fiction, citing such examples as Jefferson, Hamilton, Webster, Edwards, Dwight, Canning, Franklin, Silliman, and Henry.]

This leads us to consider what should be the character of an American romance.

The first desideratum of an American romance doubtless is that it should be truly American — that its descriptions of scenery — not English descriptions applied to American scenery nor American descriptions applied to English scenery. So with its portraitures of manners — its exhibitions of the sentiments and the modes of thinking and speaking of our people. Now the question again recurs, Has all this yet been accomplished to any considerable degree by our best writers? The more we have examined and compared their productions, the more, as already intimated, have we been led to reply in the negative. Some of them, as we have said, have laudably attempted, and measurably succeeded, in bringing out American nature to something like a truthful likeness. But still, even there, is not that nature as by them exhibited, too often mingled with the nature in the old world? Are not nearly all these writers still influenced — insensibly perhaps — by patterns received from abroad? Do they not still write, as young artists often paint a portrait, with one eye, from time to time glancing to some masterpiece of art which they have suspended on the wall before them — here to help them to a graceful attitude — there a needed shade, and there again even an expression of countenance. And while this is done, what wonder is it, that the performance, whether of artist or writer, should come from the creating hand as much an imitation or copy as an original picture?

We have too many models. As the Roman literature is, with a few variations, but the reproduction of that of Greece, so, far too much is ours the reproduction of that of England. If our writers would dispense with the use of these foreign

models, from which they have been accustomed to believe it is literary treason to depart, and begin to write as if there [were] no other books in the world, we then should be likely soon to have a literature which we might justly call our own, and what is more, one better calculated to diffuse more correct sentiments, and healthier influences among our people.

Politically we have achieved our independence of Great Britain, but in a literary point of view, we still remain, it is to be apprehended, strongly fettered with shackles of bondage. And if this be so, we shall never, till we have fully shaken off those shackles — till we cease to let foreign writers think for us, and describe for us — till we cease to borrow English wings for American muses — till we are ready, in fine, to exhibit the same independence in our literature that we have in our political relations, and launch out with a sole reliance on our own strength and resources — till, then, we shall never see a truly American novel of decided excellence, or one, probably, which shall be destined to much outlive the generation in which [it] was produced.

[Thompson now enlarges upon the reference he has just made in the above paragraph to the baneful effect of European example on American writers. He cites Walter Scott as an influence to be avoided because his Tory sentiments are directly opposed to the American spirit of democracy!]

We live not in a land, thank Heaven, where our poetry must every dozen lines be parenthesized, "God bless the Duke of York!" or where every prose essay must be tempered for the gracious ear of Majesty . . . to the effect of shackling the operations of reason, restraining the powers of imagination and of chilling and repressing the free inclinations and spontaneous sympathies of nature. But, on the contrary, we inherit a country, every page of whose history is teeming with associations calculated to awaken and inspire all that nature can feel and fancy delineate — a country in which, in thought and action we are left almost [as] free as the roving winds of Heaven, while all the great storehouses of the garnered knowledge and experience of the world, are open for our participation, and the rich mines of our own unsullied, intrinsic, and almost untouched materials, stand courting our appropria-

tion. And with all these exhaustless treasures, and these unequalled advantages over other countries in our hands, who should ever breathe a wish to go abroad for hackneyed themes, threadbare imagery or sentiment moulded and modelled to suit and sustain the old and rotten institutions of regal Europe? And who, above all, who calls himself *an American*, but should *spurn* the thought of paying, in this day, a derogatory and unnecessary reverence to that literature, which through its whole round of travels, reviews, and periodicals, is continually taunting us with this very servility of imitation, and pouring upon us its ceaseless showers of detraction and falsehood! [1]

> Shall foreign legends then go brightening down,
> And cold oblivion's night-cloud veil our own?
> Look round this land to faith and firmness dear,
> Finds no rapt spirit fit incitements here?

[1] This sensitiveness to English criticism is characteristic of the whole period from Irving to Lowell. Traces of it may be seen even to-day. Unfortunately, Thompson pushes his case for "literary independence" too far, and he clearly knows nothing of the sources of our political ideas as expressed in Jefferson and Hamilton. This is only to be expected in view of his early training and environment. It is hardly necessary to add that the views expressed in this lecture are worth noting in connection with the intensely patriotic spirit shown in *The Green Mountain Boys* and *The Rangers*.

E

Genealogy of Daniel P. Thompson

Paternal

Daniel P. Thompson was the son of Daniel of Charlestown, Mass., born in Woburn, Mass., Aug. 13, 1765, died in Berlin, Vt., Jan. 28, 1849, farmer (married Rebecca Parker of Malden, Mass., Oct. 15, 1789); son of Daniel of Woburn, Mass., born there March 9, 1734, died April 19, 1775, was killed in the battle of Lexington and Concord, is buried in Woburn cemetery (married Oct. 29, 1760, Phoebe Snow of Woburn); son of Samuel of Woburn, Mass., born there Sept. 8, 1705, died there May 13, 1748 (married Dec. 31, 1730, Ruth Wright, great-granddaughter of Capt. John Carter, one of the first settlers of Woburn); son of Jonathan of Woburn, Mass., born in Woburn, Sept. 28, 1663, died 1748, was one of the town "Tything men" (married Frances Whitmore of Cambridge); son of Jonathan, born in England, died Oct. 20, 1691 (married Nov. 28, 1655, Susannah Blodgett, — died Feb. 10, 1661, — who was the mother of his children); son of James Thompson, born in England probably 1593.

Maternal

Thompson has stated (see Duyckinck, i, 944) that his mother, Rebecca Parker Thompson, was descended from Ezekial Cheever. One finds no record of her birth, however, in either the Lynn or Malden Vital Records, although she is known to have come from Malden (see record of marriage to Daniel Thompson in Malden Vital Records). This makes it impossible definitely to establish a relationship with Elizabeth Cheever, granddaughter of Ezekial Cheever, who married Jacob Parker of Malden in Lynn on Sept. 18, 1761. There is an entry in the Malden Vital Records, however, of the birth of a daughter "Elizabeth . . . abt. 1769"; it is possible that the interpolator, who relied upon family tradition,[1] made

[1] See preface to *Births, Marriages, and Deaths, in the town of Malden, Mass., 1649–1850.*

a mistake, inserting Elizabeth for Rebecca. If 1769 be correct as the date of Rebecca Parker's birth, she would have been twenty years old at the time of her marriage to Daniel Thompson of Woburn. It is rather significant that a daughter of Daniel Thompson and Rebecca Parker was named "Elizabeth Cheever Thompson." If one accepts Thompson's word for his mother's ancestry, then it is highly probable that she was descended from Ezekial Cheever through Elizabeth Cheever and Jacob Parker. But the records do not admit of absolute proof.

The following genealogy is based on the assumption that Rebecca Parker was descended from Ezekial Cheever.

Daniel P. Thompson was the son of Daniel of Charlestown, Mass., who married Rebecca Parker of Malden, Mass., Oct. 15, 1789; Rebecca was the daughter of Jacob Parker of Malden and Elizabeth Cheever of Lynn, married Sept. 18, 1761; Elizabeth Cheever was the daughter of Thomas Cheever, 2d, and Mary Baker, his second wife, whom he married in Lynn, Aug. 6, 1712; Thomas Cheever, 2d, was the son of the Rev. Thomas Cheever of Ipswich; the latter was the son of Ezekial Cheever and Ellen Lathrop Cheever, born Aug. 23, 1658, in Ipswich, graduated at Harvard College in 1677, admitted a member of the First Church,[1] Boston, July, 1680, and took oath of freeman[2] Oct. 13, 1680, was ordained in Malden July 27, 1681, as colleague of the Rev. Michael Wigglesworth;[3] Ezekial Cheever, the famous master of the Boston Latin School, born in London, Jan. 25, 1614, came to Boston in 1637, removed to New Haven, later to Ipswich, then to Charlestown, and finally, in 1671, to Boston, where he died Aug. 21, 1708.

[1] Transcript of the Records of the First Church, Boston, in the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

[2] *Mass. Col. Records*, v, 540.

[3] *Memoir of Rev. Michael Wigglesworth*, by John Ward Dean (2d ed., Albany, N. Y.: Munsell, 1871).

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1835

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1839

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1863

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"The Great Wolf Hunt on Irish Hill in Early Time." Montpelier *Argus and Patriot*, 1867.

"The Bursting of a Cloud over Moretown." "Description of the Town of Randolph, Vt.," and "Incidents in the History of Randolph, Vt." Published in Hemenway's *Gazetteer of Vermont*, 1882.

Note

Thompson is said to have contributed a series of "Western Sketches" to the Wisconsin *Journal* in 1861, and an article on "Dreams and Presentiments" to *Arthur's Home Magazine* in 1860 or 1861, and to have contributed occasional short stories and sketches for such periodicals as *The Democratic Review*, *Our World*, and so forth, but none of these articles has been found by the writer in looking through the magazines in question.

The above list is not complete for another reason. Many of Thompson's shorter contributions to newspapers have been lost, owing to the destruction of newspaper files in various fires, such as the burning of the Capitol at Montpelier, the office of the *Green Mountain Freeman*, and Thompson's residence on Barre Street, Montpelier. But even if everything Thompson wrote were available as printed, many of his shorter contributions could not be identified, as he did not sign them.

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